Age of Decline and Islamic Directives for Muslims

Urdu Compliation

Ml. Mufti Akhtar Imam Adil Qasmi

Edited and translated
from the Urdu

Md. Ibrahim Khan

MA, PGDTE

Published by

Jamia Rabbani, Manorwa Sharif,

Samastipur, Bihar, India.

Name of Urdu title	:	*Ahd-e-Zawal me Musalmano ke liye Islami Hidayat*.
Authored by	:	ML. Akhtar Imam Adil, Qasmi
Published by	:	Jamia Rabbani, Manorwa Sharif, Samastipur, Bihar, India.
Name of English Title	:	Age of Decline and Islamic Directives for Muslims.
Edited and translated by	:	Md. Ibrahim Khan MA, PGDTE
Pages	:	viii + 153 = 161
Year of Publication	:	
Price	:	
Published by	:	Jamia Rabbani, Manorwa Sharif, Samastipur, Bihar, India.

Dedication

- To those dedicated servants of Allah and Martyres of Fidality who rowed successfully the boat of the Community as long as they lived; and with their death of martyrdom, they wrote the history of truthfulness and insurpassable moral integrity by their pure blood;

And

- To those epitome of fortitude, constancy, courage and absolute submission and resignation to the will of Allah the indelible imprints of whose noble character shall rest in sweet memory of the posterity for ever; whose impressions shall always remain saliently inscribed on the wide sheet of the globe, serving as beacon for peace-loving people as long as the present structure of the world exists.

Akhtar Imam Adil Qasmi

۞ لَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِىٓ أَمْوَٰلِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ
وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوٓا۟ أَذًى كَثِيرًا ۚ وَإِن تَصْبِرُوا۟
وَتَتَّقُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ ٱلْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate others with Allah much abuse. But if you are patient and fear Allah - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of determination. (Surah Ali 'Imran 3:186).

Table of Contents

Foreword

Over a decade ago from now I received a letter from Britain. The contents of the letter were extremely heart-rending, full of sorrow and an acute sense of dejection, every word expressing extreme disappointment. Dismayed at the soulful state of affairs of the contemporary world with reference to the Muslim Ummah, the addressor had asked me the reason why the promises made by Allah and His Messenger in the Holy Qur'an and ahadith for the faithful and those working for the interest of faith are not being fulfilled? The addressor spoke plainly of his deeper sentiments. Of course there exists hardly a believer in the entire world who is without deep concern for the situation found against Muslims worldwide in the contemporary age. This dejection is quite natural. Still, let there be no disappointment is characteristic of unfaith and disbelief. The Qur'an says:

A wise poet has expressed the some idea in his following couplet:

Na ho nomid, nomidi zawala ilmo irfan hai, ummide marde mumin hai khuda ke razdaromai.

(Be not disappointed, disappointment being the decline of the knowledge and lore; The hope of the believer is in fact from among the confidants of Allah).

Getting proper knowledge, wisdom and deep secrets of the Divine acts taking place in the cosmos is neither possible nor desirable. The study of the Qur'an leads us to the fact that even the Prophet and Messengers of Allah have not often been able to properly comprehend the deep secrets of some acts of Allah, let alone the common men.

Man, on the other hand is form with a He is desirous to know the reason lying behind the acts of the Unseen according to his own narrow viewpoint and the level of understanding and perception. Quite obviously, such a wish holds no value with Allah, the Omnipotent.

In reply I exhorted the sad addressor to hold fast the way of piety and God fearing; of patience and perseverance. However he felt that those feelings were not limited merely to himself it presented a case common to the entire ummah of the age. He asked me to prepare a general article to address this traumatic situation.

It needs not mention that this theme is by no way a novel one, nor is unprecedented the present dismal state of affairs we are passing through. The Ulama and the men of Islamic learning have extensively addressed the situation in every age in the past by telling them how to face such dismal states of affairs and have tried their best to console the dejected and pacify the sinking hearts through the true Islamic teachings. Still, the addressor continued in his insistence and I had to arrange some teachings out of the Qur'an, hadith and the directives of the pious predecessors. A draft thus came into being. In deference to the wish of some of my best friends the same draft and collection of the Islamic teachings is being now published in the form of special issue, thereby to bring into light whole the material in a compact shape. May Allah turn it useful for the Muslims, place it in His good acceptance and make it a good asset for my *Akhirah*.

-Akhtar Imam Adil Qasmi

The Wretched Ummah

The present of the Muslim Ummah is extremely dismal and disheartening. An uncontrollable flood of evils is sweeling with no break. In the face of the tempest of evil the asset of faith is too weak ; the entire world of disbelief stands united to oppose the disunited world of Islam. Today an unreal and fictitious base is enough to unite the world of disbelief; in case of the world of Islam, however, a base as strong, true and pure as faith in One God is proving insufficient. The bond of strak materialism or a common feeling of fighting the truth has brought unity between different nations of the world but, strangely enough, the strong bond of spirituality and common Utterance has turned unable to bring the shattered Muslim nations to a single viewpoint.

Today the Muslim Ummah is faced with unprecedented dangers both from within and outside. From outside the pressure of the entire world of disbelief is mounting with each passing moment; from within it stands torn into pieces due to destructive internal disagreements and schisms. Is there anyone to enlighten this Ummah with the phenomenal truth that a nation torn from within by civil strife and disagreements can never face the belligerence of the hostile world, and a nation devoid of Faith and conviction could never keep united its disarrayed ranks. Who can tell it the secret that:

Faith is the only unifying force; without it all is lost,

In the absence of the mutual gravitational force unity is mere an illusion.

How could this community, accustomed only to listen the harsh language, learn this universal reality that success does lie only in unity. A galaxy of the shattered and disunited stars could do nothing to improve the things. It needs not mention that the fortunes of a nation whose majority has tunred wretched could not be changed by the supplications of a few Godly men of strong faith and conviction.

A hadith of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) has so perfectly depicted the prevailing condition of an all-embracing decline of the Ummah in the following words:

"Once the Messenger of Allah addressed his Companions and said,

"On you is to come a period in which all opposing nations of the world will invite each other against you as are invited to eat food on a common table." " Will we be less in number that day?" the Companions saught clarification from the Prophit. "No the Prophet replied, 'your number is those days will be much greater than it is today. But you will have no weight in the comity of the nations of that day. Your enemy will not hold you in awesome feelings. Your importance will be reduced to the froth floating on the surface of the water of the flood, unable even to withstand the slightest gust of wind or a current of the waves." Replying to the question of his Companions as to where lay reasons of the fearful decline, the Messenger pointed two weaknesses: excessive love of the world and material prosperity and a disliking to death. (Mishkat Sharif)

The predication of our cultural decline and of developing in us a servile mentality made by the Messenger of Allah in the remote past has become truer today than ever before in the past.

On the authority of Haz. Abu Said khndri the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said:

"You will so closely imitate the lustful and immoral People of the Book that there will remain no difference between you and them, so much so that if they foolishly entered the hole of an iguana, you too, will do the same to imitate them.(agreed upon, report, Mishkat p.458)

The reason for this moral perversion, as specified by the Prophet himself,that the Ummah will gradually lose the most of its men of piety, faith,deep conviction and moral integrity. In the absence of the truly Godly people there will remain only those who will morally be worthless, like the waste of grain or date .Such people will carry no weight in the eye of Allah.(ibid.p.459)

A nation reduced to such a low level in respect of morality and ethical values is naturally distined to develop internal disagreements and destructive schisms which eventually lead to blood feuds and never –ending internal strifes. The first target of the sword of such community turns those who are associated with the management of religious services. This way refuge of the nation becomes refugeless, and hardly a Muslim household offers shelter to those who had once been the shelter of every Muslim. The result is that the people of Faith and piety go into passivity and resignation from the affains of the ummah, and the power is grabbed by the worst people of the world.

Haz Huzaifa bin Yaman,the Companion entrusted by the Prophet with many secrets,reports the Prophet to have said:

"The Day of Judgement is not to take place unless you put to sword your religions leader, imam, and use your sword and military abilities against your own selves and the people of your own community, and the affiants of your world fall to the people devoid of good and virtue."(Tirmizi, Mishkat p. 459)

Results of Material Affluence

This is a universal truth that no nation is liable to suffer a destruction and decline merely on account of being in possession of less material means and resources. The decline of a nation of distinct ideology begins when the abundance of material means leads it to a grave moral crisis and, as a result, the sense of religious bashfulness and solidarity fades away.

Ali bin Abu Talib says that one day I was sitting in the august assembly of the the Holy Prophet in the Prophet's masjid. In the meanwhile Haz Musab bin Umair approached there, wearing an old and torn sheet. This spectacle brought tear to the Prophet's eyes, for before entering into the fold of Islam Musab bin Umair used to be counted from the most affluent and richest people of Makkah. The lack of material means and resources, in the earlier age of Islam, however, had brought such plight to him. Then the Prophet said : What will be your condition when you will wear one suit in the morning the second one in the evening ? One pot of food will be placed before you and another one will be removed. Your houses will be covered with the cloths like the House of Allah stands covered" ? With the idea of material prosperity in the future the Companions were pleased and reacted. Those days will indeed be of great fortune and prosperity for us, O the Messenger of Allah We will then be in a better position to devote ourselves to the worship and service of Allah without facing any problem for our worldly needs? The Prophet, however, reacted, 'compared to those future days of material prosperity, you are far better today." (ibid p 459)

It is a well proved fact that the excessive material prosperity brings weakness and laxity in men and materialism overpowers them in a way leaving hardly any room for religious and spiritual guest Perhaps the same thing has been indicated by the Prophet in his following words: A time is to come on people when sticking to the religion will turn so hard as to keep the piece of fire in one's hand (ibid p. 459)

Comprehensive Guidelines for Muslims living in an Age of Religious and Social Evils

In the hadith literature there exist many reports of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) which seek to tell the Ummah the reasons responsible for the decline of Muslims in respect of their religion, faith, morality and society. Through a careful study of such reports we might be able to trace those factors and causes which have brought an all inclusive decline to the Muslim Ummah worldwide. The study may enable us to prepare a comprehensive work plan to be followed in the age of evils. Apart from other reports scattered about in the hadith literature around the topic, we may limit our study and contemplation to those few ones just cited. They are easily to be found in the chapters of the literature under al- Riqaaq, normally found in each book on hadith. The contents of these hadiths point to the causes which have operated to bring decline to us. Between the lines the same hadiths enlighten us with the necessary remedial steps and precautions.

As far as the causes of decline of Muslim Ummah are concerned, they, in the light of the hadiths, are the following. If they are found in the Ummah, the Ummah can not escape the decline, as in evident from the past history.

- Excessive love of the world and material of prosperity.
- Strong feeling for aversion to death and leaving this world.
- Blind immitation of the so-called cultural manifestations of the disbelieving nations of the world and developing in themselves the feelings of surrender and submissiveness before those nations merely as a mark of recognition of their material prosperity and advancement.
- Acute dearth of virtuous and solicitous people and inappropriation of existing ones.
- Uprising against the solicitous religious leadership; conspiracies against it and a wide-spread feeling of mistrust and disgust against the people of deep religious attachment.

- Trusting unsolicitous, cunning and hypocrite people and nurturing mistrust about sincere and trustworthy people of the Ummah.
- Excessive material well-being and abundance of material means and resources. This of course is bound to hasten the moral and social decadence, resulting in the complete fall of the entire community.
- Development of excessive material tendencies.
- Domination of the evil-natured and wicked human elements over important affairs of the Ummah.
- Dominance of avarice and stinginess over the people of wealth and their pathetic unreadiness to spend their wealth for the cause of Allah and This religion.
- Getting women on men's nerves.
- Abundance of obscenity and illicit sexual activities.
- General tendency of dishonesty, mistrust, embezzlement and perfidy.
- Abundance of gross irregularities in weighing and measuring.
- Passing of unjust verdicts, miscarriage of justice and corruption of the institutions of justice.
- Shameless disloyalty and ruthless breach of trust.
- A general tendency of concealing the truth, dissembling, commiting evils under changed names and giving attractive names to evil designs.
- Acute dearth of real knowledge.
- Dominance of selfishness.

Common Detriments of the Age of Decline

As a result of the moral and social ailments setting in a community, the community could by no way escape those detriments as are indicated by the hadiths above cited. They may be the following ones:

- Loss of the standing prestige.
- More insignificance and worthlessness even than the froth lying over the surface of the flood water and litter inside the dustbin.
- Cultural and civic decadence and dominance of intellectual servility over the entire nations.
- Turning of the virtuous people extremely rare and abundance of the evil and mischievous elements in the human society.
- Civil war, social insecurity, political chaos and growing tension.
- Materialistic mentality and the resultant moral decadence.
- Disintegration of the central unifying force, collective disorder and growing feeling of insecurity and helplessness in the entire society.
- Apathy to the taste of the devotional acts.
- Domination of the worst people over the society.
- Reversion of the social order, falling men to the rule of women.
- Growing cowardice and the lack of courage.
- Abundance of death, bloodshed and unmindful killings.
- Deprival of people from blessings in sustenance, growing resourcelessness and destitution.
- Dominance of politically and militarily powerful enemies over the community.

- Planned political pressure and military attacks from the enemies with no provocation from Muslims.
- Unprecedented bloodshed of Muslims by their powerful political combined enemies and their subjection to ruthless wrong and barbarism.
- Indifference of Muslims to the Divine laws of lawful and unlawful and distortion of the communal mentality.
- Emergence of continuing evils and mischiefs as though rain is falling again and again.
- Avaricious pursuit of the material wealth, evincing disrespect towards religion and religious affairs and selling the religion and faith just for miserable material gains of this world.

Safe Way to Tread

Faced with such critical situation a true believer and pursuant of the right way is left with no other safe option than to take the following steps:

- Concerted efforts to shed the material inclinations and worldly pleasures and replace them with the spiritual ones and developing an awakening towards the life of the *Akhirat.*
- Acquisition of correct knowledge of the true values and traditions of Islamic culture and civilization and shedding all inhibitions and inferiority complex of all types.
- Full use of all intellectual faculties and rediscovery of sharp critical senses.
- Concerted and sincere efforts to recreate a strong and unbreakable unity among different sections and groups of the Ummah.
- Resurgence of creedal sensivity and cultivation of true religious feelings.
- Devoting more time and labour to religious activities than to maintain the corporeal life.
- Developing an acute sense of trust vis-à-vis the material means and resources, their right use and curbing the passions for their blind pursuance.
- Due consideration to the limits ordained by the Shariat to restrict the intermixing of the opposite sexes---men and women.
- Giving up all deceptive and fraudulent practices.
- Freeing oneself to engage in the deeds of virtue, keeping off from evils and avoiding indulgence in the acts without an avail.
- The thing of greater importance being that fortitude and perseverence must be stuck with all possible strength and every change of fortune should be accepted as the will Allah.

Fortitude and Patience : A Shield in times of Mischief and Turbulence

Patience is perhaps the only highest spiritual force wherewith a Muslim can successfully face all difficulties he is ever faced with. A key to unlock every lock, patience is a spiritual weapon to face and defeat all types of material weaponry. Addressing the resourceless community of Muslims, the Holy Qur'ans directs to hold fast patience, fortitude and prayer in the following words :

"*O those who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere. (2:153)*

Throughout the Holy Book of Allah there are more than seventy places where *sabr* and *sabirin* have been mentioned and most of the higher grades of moral excellence and the resultant reward in the *jannah* have been attributed to the *sabr*. To quote some of them :

"*The best promise of your Lord was fulfilled for the children of Israel, because they had patience and constancy." (7:137)*

"*And we appointed from among them, leaders who would give guidance under our command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have belief in our signs." (32:124).*

"*And we will certainly bestow, on those who patiently persevere, their reward according to the best of their actions. (16:96).*

Patience in the Quran

Allah, Who has defined the best way of life for people and the most appropriate moral conduct for their nature, announces in "*We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers*" (Surat al-Isra', 82) that patience is a mercy for the faithful.

People can gain Allah's pleasure and love by fully applying the Qur'an's truths in their lives. Allah requires the faithful to adhere to the Qur'an's morality as long as they are alive, without showing any weakness. To carry out this task successfully, the faithful must acquire the supreme characteristic of patience, which is the result of faith. Those who learn the secret of patience can demonstrate the required steadfastness in every act and prayer.

Attaining this secret is extremely easy. Allah manifests His attribute "Al-Sabur" (The Patient) on those who believe in Him and helps perfect the determination in their hearts.

The real source of this lifelong true patience is the believers' faith in Allah. They know that Allah encompasses all things in His knowledge, that everything occurs only with His permission, and that He hides thousands of blessings and benefits behind all events. In addition, they do not forget that Allah is the Friend, Guardian, and Helper of the faithful. Thus, although it may not seem so at first glance, all events are arranged to somehow benefit the believers. For this reason, patience is not a moral characteristic that makes life difficult for the faithful; rather, it is a form of worship that they accept wholeheartedly and with joy. Here is one point of difference between true patience and the view of patience as commonly understood in society.

Many people do not know the true meaning of patience, how truly patient people are required to behave, or how important this is in Allah's sight. They regard patience more as holding up one's head when faced with difficulties and problems, either overcoming or enduring them. Thus, they consider patience as the ability to withstand something, up to a certain point, and that an occasional loss of patience is quite normal. Moreover, according to this non-Qur'anic understanding, it is utterly futile to show patience in a matter from which no concrete benefit

can be derived. And so when faced with such a situation, they give way to frustration and believe that being patient is useless.

The Qur'anic concept of true patience is quite different from this understanding of endurance. In the first place, people experience patience as the instruction of Allah and so can neither exhaust nor lose it. They carry out this form of worship joyfully and fervently and expect no concrete benefit in exchange for it, because they are patient solely to earn Allah's approval. What matters for them is the knowledge that they will earn His approval with their superior morality. For them, such a reward is enough.

Furthermore, the patience recommended by the Qur'an is not a moral characteristic employed only in times of hardship. True patience is shown in fully applying all of the Qur'an's teachings, in being scrupulous in guarding against all behavior that Allah warns against, and in being determined to live according to the Qur'an's morality as long as one is alive and with no thought of deviating from it, regardless of circumstances.

In "But, in your Lord's sight, right actions that are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope" (Surat al-Kahf, 46), Allah points out that proper behavior carried on with determination is regarded with approval and invites the faithful to be patient under all circumstances.

Those who have true patience

In reality, patience is shown in fully applying all of the Qur'an's teachings, in being scrupulous in guarding one against the modes of behavior that Allah warns against, and in being determined to live according to the Qur'an's morality as long as one is alive and with no thought of deviating from it, regardless of circumstances.

In "*But, in your Lord's sight, right actions that are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope*" (Surat al-Kahf, 46), Allah points out that proper behavior carried on with determination is regarded with approval and invites the faithful to be patient under all circumstances.

Only the faithful understand the true nature of patience and live in the manner of which Allah approves, for they have accepted the Qur'an as their guide. And, only the Qur'an explains the real meaning of patience and the type of patience that is acceptable to Allah. For this reason, the only people capable of being "*patient with a beautiful patience*" are those who follow the Qur'an.

The source of their patience is their faith in Allah and their submission to Him. Like all of their other characteristics, patience emerges only through a true understanding of faith, because to believe is to understand that there is no deity but Allah, that He encompasses all things in His knowledge, that only Allah has the power to determine one's destiny, and that nobody can enjoy gain or suffer loss without His willing it.

One reason why the believers can show patience is because their faith enables them to appreciate Allah's might and glory. Those who know that Allah has boundless wisdom and boundless knowledge also know that only He can determine what will be the finest life for them. They know that Allah possesses all knowledge about all creatures and events in the past, present, and future, whereas people have only a limited intelligence that is prone to making mistakes in determining what is good and what is bad. In most cases, a seemingly unfavorable event may bring many benefits, although people may well be totally unaware of this. Allah points out this important truth: "It may be that

you hate something when it is good for you, and it may be that you love something when it is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know" (Surat al-Baqara, 216).

Thus, knowing that only Allah possesses this knowledge and wisdom, the believers put their trust in Him, fully aware that whatever He wills is always beneficial, even though the benefit may not be immediately apparent. Therefore, they display true patience. In other words, one characteristic of those who have true patience is that they are people who have grasped and embraced the nature of destiny.

The Qur'an states that the faithful are patient and put their trust in Allah, as follows:

Those who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord. (Surat an-Nahl: 42)

Another reason why the believers exhibit such a patient determination throughout their lives is their strong fear and consciousness of Allah. Just as they know that Allah has a boundless love and mercy for His servants, they also know that the punishment of Hell is eternal. Allah warns those who consider themselves too great to worship Him and who turn their faces away from Him of the torment to come. As the faithful are aware of this warning, they take pains to avoid it by being extremely careful and patient in implementing all of Allah's instructions and prohibitions. They channel their fear and consciousness of Allah into living the Qur'an's morality throughout their lives.

Awareness of this world's true face also ensures that the faithful will continue to be patient. As is stated in "We will test you until We know those of you who strive hard [for the cause of Allah] and those who are steadfast, and test what is reported of you" (Surah Muhammad, 31), Allah makes a distinction between those who show patience in their worship of Him and those who manifest their resistance by becoming impatient. As a result, He will give those who worship Him in this life noble residences as hospitality in the next, while punishing those who deny Him with an eternal, inescapable Hell.

No matter what hardship they encounter, the faithful know that such hardship is a test from Allah and so do not lose their patience. How could they, knowing that they will face the Day of Judgment and receive their reward for their fine morality? Allah's Messenger (saas) also mentions that the believers remain patient when faced with calamity, since they always trust Allah, as follows:

The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant. From whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it. But when the wind becomes quiet, it becomes straight again. Similarly, a believer is afflicted with calamities (but remains patient until Allah removes the difficulty). (Bukhari)

One fundamental element of patience is exactly this—the believers have certainty about the Day of Judgment and the afterlife. Armed with the strength they derive from the knowledge that they will be tested here and rewarded on the Day of Judgment for every event for which they showed patience, and that Allah gives the good news of His mercy to those who show patience, they are committed to showing patience.

As we can see, only the faithful can experience true patience, because only they have bound and delivered themselves up to a sincere faith in Allah, have appreciated His might, and put their trust in destiny. In addition, they have a powerful fear and consciousness of Allah, have understood this world's true face, and believe firmly in the afterlife.

The companions of the Prophet (SAWS) and the excellence of their character.

From among the countless merits of the companions of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) the most outstanding one was their unconditional submission to the will of Allah and unquestioned resignations to this decisions. They had indeed reached the top most grade resignation to Allah's will and loved him more than every thing else. The difficulties they faced and the pains they suffered never disheartened or dejected them. They received all such circumstances with pleasure and faced them happily. The Quaran expressly acknowledged this fascinating trait of their character as the mark of distinction of their blessed lives.

In this everlasting Book, the Holy Qur'an Allah has declared.

"Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with him" (98:8)

This is not a common place position; indeed it is a position which could only be achieved after undergoing hader spiritual exercises. Ascending this rare spiritual position one turns able to please Allah taala; by resigning oneself to the will of Allah and all types of this decisions with relation to one's life. This being in strict accordance with the Divine Law of rewarding good for good". The principle of has been expressed in the following words:

"Recompense of goodness is but-goodness". The 'goodness' elsewhere has been explained as:

وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِى جَنَّٰتِ عَدْنٍ ۚ وَرِضْوَٰنٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٢﴾

Allah has promised to the believers -men and women, - Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of 'Adn (Eden Paradise). But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme success.

The Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) and the Excellence of their Character

From among the countless merits of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) the most outstanding one was their uncondtional submission to the will of Allah and unquestioned resignations to His decisions. They had indeed reached the topmost grade resigning themself to Allah's will and loved Him more than every thing else. The difficulties they faced and the pains they suffered never disheartened or dejected them. They endured all such circumstances with pleasure and faced them happily. The Qur'an expressly acknowledged this fascinating trait of their character as the mark of distinction of their blessed lives in This ever-lasting book, the holy Qur'an Allah has declared.

"Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him" (98:8).

This is not a commonplace position; indeed it is a position which could only be achieved after undergoing harder spiritual exercises. Ascending this rare spiritual position one turns able to please Allah *Taala* by resigning oneself to the will of Allah and all types of His decisions with relation to one's life. This being in strict accordance with the Divine law of recompense" good for good". The principle has been expressed in the following words:

"Is there any Reward of good except Good" (60/55) The "goodness" elsewhere has been explained as:

Allah has promised to Believers, men and women, the Gardens under which flow the rivers, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. And the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah: This of course is the felicity the supreme. (al Quran 72/9)

The Patience of the Faithful

And be steadfast. Allah does not let the wage of good-doers go to waste. (Surah Hud, 115)

As we have seen, there are very significant differences between the believers' patience and that of a large section of society. The faithful regard patience as a method of drawing closer to Allah and live it as a form of worship ordered by the Qur'an. The Qur'an details this fine moral characteristic of the faithful, as follows:

Their patience is founded on trusting Allah

Most people show patience at times of severe misfortune when nothing else can be done. However, this type of patience has nothing to do with true patience. They can endure only when faced with misfortune, and do so only because they do not consider everything as a test from Allah, a test in which are concealed divine blessings or benefits. They make their spiritual state obvious by complaining about the problem and making various facial expressions. Until the situation ends, they cannot be rescued from their negative spiritual state.

The believers' true patience, however, is very different from mere endurance. They are aware that Allah creates whatever happens to them for a reason, and that therefore it contains some hidden benefit. Knowing that Allah has determined the best possible destiny for them, they meet everything with pleasure and an open heart. Allah tells the faithful to adopt this attitude in the following verse:

> "*Those who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord*" *(Surat al-'Ankabut, 59).*

No matter what the circumstances, the faithful do not complain or whine. In addition, Allah points out that His creation of difficulty

together with ease is His immutable law: "*For truly with hardship comes ease; truly with hardship comes ease*" (Surat al-Inshirah, 5-6).

Allah reminds His servants of another important fact: "*Allah does not impose on any self any more than it can bear*" (Surat al-Baqara, 286). Allah tests everybody through the difficulties with which they can cope. Thus, if people experience problems, it is a certain truth that Allah has given them the strength to endure patiently.

Aware of such verses, the faithful do not regard patience as "suffering through a misfortune." They know that even if their troubles never end, these are concealed blessings and that the patient will be granted the finest, returns in the afterlife. Thus, they are never overcome by troubles; rather, they pray to Allah to lighten their load in the knowledge that only Allah can overcome a problem, for He is the One Who sent it in the first place. They take refuge in Him and seek His help:

> "*Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not place on us a load like the one You placed on those before us. Our Lord, do not place on us a load that we have not the strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Master, so help us against the unbelievers.*" *(Surat al-Baqara, 286)*

Their patience is lasting

> "*But, in your Lord's sight, right actions that are lasting bring a better reward and are a better basis for hope.*" *(Surat al-Kahf, 46)*

People who practice the non-Qur'anic version of patience cannot experience patience as a continual and stable element of morality. One day they may show patience, but the next day they may show impatience.

But the faithful, who experience patience as an instruction of Allah and a requirement of their religion, never deviate from it. They strive to live their entire lives in a manner that pleases Allah and earns His approval as a result of their steadfast morality. Clearly, the behavior most pleasing to Allah is that of patience and steadfastness in all circumstances, because He tells us in the Qur'an that "*right actions that are lasting*" are more blessed.

In another verse, Allah gives the faithful the following instruction:

> "*Restrain yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, desiring His face.*" *(Surat al-Kahf, 28)*

Thus by conforming to this verse, the faithful display unceasing patience to earn Allah's approval.

They are patient for Allah's approval

Those who do not live by the Qur'anic morality hope that they will be rewarded for their temporary display of patience. When this does not happen, in their own words "their patience runs out," because they are patient only for worldly benefits. They forget about earning Allah's approval and that they will be held accountable for their actions on the Day of Judgment. Allah informs His servants of this secret: "*Or did you imagine that you were going to enter the Garden without Allah knowing those among you who had struggled and knowing the steadfast?*" (Surah Al Imran, 142). Those who are patient in order to win Allah's approval will enter Paradise, whereas those who are patient only in hopes of worldly benefit will be deprived of this fine reward that Allah promises.

Believers, who are guided by the Qur'an and thus are aware of this fact, show patience only to earn Allah's approval. They expect no material reward. This attribute is stressed in one verse, as follows:

> *Those who are steadfast in seeking the face of their Lord. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 22)*

Their patience is joyful, willing, and wholehearted

The faithful display great patience when facing any difficulty, when carrying out fully the Qur'an's teachings, and by demonstrating the most steadfast morality under all circumstances. One reason why they can display this moral excellence at all times is because they understand that their most important task is to carry out Allah's commands. Thus they adhere joyfully and willingly to the Qur'an's morality. And, as a result, the knowledge that they will gain Allah's love, mercy, and assistance ensures that they will easily overcome any difficulty and will show patience at all times.

In one verse, Allah invites His servants to patience with the expression "be patient for your Lord." This ensures that they will adhere to His morality willingly no matter what may occur. Another reason for

their display of wholehearted patience is that Allah informs us of His "*love of the patient*" (Surah Al 'Imran, 146).

Moreover, Allah has revealed "*Peace be upon you because of your steadfastness! How wonderful is the Ultimate Abode!*" (Surat ar-Ra'd, 24) to let the patient know that they will receive a fine reward on the Day of Judgment.

All of these blessings ensure that the faithful will live in patience with great joy and desire.

Their patience is never shaken

People whose fear and consciousness of Allah, as well as their faith in Him, are weak may modify their behavior according to other people or their surroundings or circumstances. They may behave well toward other people from whom they think they can benefit while displaying exactly the opposite behavior toward those whom they do not know or look down upon. For example, in societies that are far from religion, a shopkeeper who shows an exaggerated respect and interest toward a wealthy customer is a quite common sight. If such a customer causes difficulties or is capricious or condescending, the shopkeeper tolerates it all. But this same shopkeeper might not act as tolerantly when faced with even a justified request from a customer who might have only limited means. Moreover, such people who behave well toward others when life is good may change character completely when they are facing hardship. So long as a friend entertains them or provides them with opportunities, they behave very well. However, if that person falls on hard times and cannot help or entertain them as before, they may then become impatient.

This fickleness is due to their decision, conscious or otherwise, to build their moral values not upon the Qur'an's conception of morality but upon their own primitive understanding and benefits. In contrast, the faithful live out the Quran's morality, which is based on a fundamental faith solely to earn Allah's approval. Thus nothing in this world can cause them to lose their patience, which is one facet of their noble character. In contrast to other people, the faithful maintain their outstanding patience even in times of difficulty and hardship.

> The Qur'an draws attention to this superior morality, as follows:
> *It is not devoutness to turn your faces to the East or to the West. Rather, those with true devoutness are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, and the Prophets; who, despite their love for it, give away their wealth to their relatives, orphans, the*

very poor, travellers, beggars, and to free slaves; and who establish prayer and pay alms; those who honour their contracts when they make them, and are steadfast in poverty and illness and in battle. Those are the people who are true. They are the people who guard against evil. (Surat al-Baqara, 177)

As this verse shows, Allah states that patience during hard times is a condition of true virtue. The faithful conform to this teaching and exhibit patience whenever they are confronted with hardship.

Their patience opens the way to superior morality

Since the faithful regard patience as a form of worship, their patience gives them several other fine characteristics, as follows:

The steadfast, the truthful, the obedient, the givers, and those who seek forgiveness before dawn. (Surah Al 'Imran, 17)

In another verse, Allah defines the faithful *as "Those who give in times of both ease and hardship, those who control their rage and pardon other people*" (Surah Al 'Imran, 134). All of these characteristics can be experienced only through a heartfelt acceptance of the Qur'anic concept of true patience.

Overcoming anger and remaining calm over a long period of time is possible only by exercising patience. Those who help people even when they themselves are experiencing hardship can do so only because they are patient for the sake of Allah. They behave this way because they know that helping others at such times will help them earn Allah's approval. The ability of a just person to pardon an unjust one also is a characteristic of true patience.

In the same way, lifelong obedience to Allah's commands and prohibitions is possible only through patience. The faithful display decisiveness in self-sacrifice, goodwill, modesty, forgiveness, honesty, loyalty, and affection, and live out these moral characteristics through patience.

As we have seen, patience opens the road for the faithful to a superior morality of which Allah approves. For the faithful, living this morality earns His endless blessing and a place in Paradise. There can be no finer salvation.

Their patience is an intelligent patience

It would be a serious mistake to think that the believers' patience is only a matter of waiting to remove obstacles and overcome difficulties without making any effort. On the contrary, Allah instructs them to make every effort to secure the people's tranquility and comfort by making full use of their minds, consciences, and opportunities. For this reason, they maintain a heartfelt patience in the face of troubles, and yet strive with all their might to remove the source(s) of the problem.

For example, finishing an urgent task may give rise to incorrect behavior in impatient people. In particular, many people become very angry at the prospect of losing a large expected profit through human error, for they do not consider the possibility that this could be a hidden blessing. Believers, in contrast, trust Allah no matter how great the loss may be, and continue to be serene and at ease. However, they also take all of the precautions they can to prevent this from happening again. They warn the person(s) who made the mistake, turn it over to a more qualified person, or take even more precautions.

People who are unaware of the Qur'an's concept of patience regard patience as a matter of simply waiting without making any effort. In fact, they consider such helpless behavior as extremely virtuous. Allah, in contrast, encourages people to overcome their difficulties by exhibiting patience and using their minds, consciences, and material resources. Several verses draw our attention to such facts, such as in the case of those who migrated from Makka to Madina, as follows:

> *But to those who emigrated after they were persecuted and then strove and remained steadfast, to them your Lord is All-Compassionate, Most Merciful. (Surat an-Nahl, 110)*

In addition to this, while taking active measures in the face of difficulties, believers also continue to pray to Allah for assistance, for this is what the Qur'an tells them to do, as follows:

> **When they came out against Talut and his troops, they said:**
>
> "*Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us, make our feet firm, and help us against this unbelieving people.*" *(Surat al-Baqara, 250)*

As can be seen, the patience of the faithful is an intelligent patience. Such behavior will receive the finest reward in Allah's presence.

In patience, the faithful know no limits and compete with one another

As stated in "No indeed! Truly man is unbridled, seeing himself as self-sufficient" (Surat al-'Alaq, 6-7), the faithful know that regarding themselves as competent in any field leads to excess and conceit. Thus they do not consider themselves competent even if they perform some tasks perfectly. Throughout their lives, they strive to develop themselves and achieve a finer, better behavior.

Behind these sincere efforts lies their attachment to and love of our Lord, and their fear and consciousness of Him. Since their greatest aim is to achieve His love and approval, they try to live according to the spirit and the letter of the Qur'an's teachings. Aware that they can never be adequate in such a task, they always strive to put even more effort into adhering to His teachings in this life.

They know that the amount of effort they make will earn a commensurate reward in Allah's presence and that, to this extent, they can easily be united with His blessings. With the words, "*Race each other to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden li.e., Paradise] as wide as the heavens and the Earth, prepared for the people who guard against evil.*" *(Surah Al 'Imran, 133)*, Allah urges the faithful to compete in good with each other in order to gain His approval and a place in Paradise. One of these matters is patience, as we read: "*O you who believe, be steadfast; be supreme in steadfastness*" (Surah Al 'Imran, 200). In such cases, the faithful know that they will earn Allah's love and closeness to Him, and so compete with one another to display their best behavior. The believers are patient regardless of their circumstances and, trusting in our Lord, show their determination through their consistent behavior. Even when confronted with totally unexpected developments, such as being forced to live in the streets or a shelter because their houses have burned down, they do not complain or think "if only it had not happened." They understand that Allah has sent a hidden blessing to them, and so live in the tranquility that this understanding brings. They continue this behavior even if faced with another event that makes their situation even worse. In short, no matter what terrible difficulties they may face, they race each other to patience, as Allah has ordered.

They encourage one another to be patient

In the verse: "*Let there be a community among you who call to the good, and enjoin the right, and forbid the wrong. They are the ones who have success*" (Surah Al 'Imran: 104), Allah instructs the faithful to divert one another from evil by advising what is good and guiding one another toward positive behavior. In line with this, the faithful spend their lives calling upon one another to follow the Qur'an in full and to avoid all that Allah has forbidden. In particular, they encourage patience, because they know that those who adhere to the morality that Allah loves will reach Paradise,'while others will be condemned to the torment of Hell. Therefore, they want all who are faithful to earn the right to enter Paradise as much as they desire their own salvation. For this reason, they call on the faithful to be patient in all their acts of worship and while going about their daily lives. The Qur'an gives the example of this when our Prophet (saas) and his companion were in the cave on their way to Madina:

> *If you do not help him, Allah helped him when the unbelievers drove him out and there were two of them in the cave. He said to his companion, "Do not be despondent, for Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His serenity upon him. (Surat at-Tawba, 40)*

Even while hiding under extremely difficult conditions from people who might have killed him, the Prophet (saas) reminded his companion of Allah's assistance. All Muslims should learn from and follow this example. Guiding one another toward patience by mentioning the strength and assistance of Allah whatever the circumstances may be indicates superior morality.

The Qur'an refers to such people as "*the Companions of the Right*":

> *(Have We not! shown him the two highways? But he has not braved the steep ascent. What will convey to you what the steep ascent is? It is freeing a slave or feeding on a day of hunger, an orphaned relative or a poor man in the dust; then to be one of those who believes and urge each other to steadfastness and compassion. Those are the Companions of the Right. (Surat al-Balad, 10-18)*

When the faithful show patience

Except for those who are steadfast and do right actions. They will receive forgiveness and a large reward. (Surah Hud, 11)

So far, we have described the Qur'anic understanding of patience and have highlighted how it differs from the understanding held by those who are far from religion. In this section, we will explain what believers are patient with by comparing their behavior with the impatience of the unbelievers.

However, before going into detail on this matter, we should be aware of the fact that Allah tests His servants by sending troubles to them at a time of His choosing. This may be a momentary or a long-term test, but one thing is certain: In the afterlife, regardless of what they faced while in this world, the finest life is the one lived by those who are faithful to Allah. Allah announces this in the following verse:

Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer. We will give them a good life and recompense them according to the best of what they did. (Surat an-Nahl, 97)

The faithful are patient when Allah tests them and, as a result, receive His help in their effort to overcome these problems. He eases the believers' tasks and helps them, as follows:

Allah will certainly help those who help Him – Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj, 40)

In the coming pages, we will analyze the principal circumstances during which the faithful, with Allah's support, exhibit patience.

Following their consciences

Allah created each person with a conscience to let him or her know what is right and wrong in all situations. This conscience calls upon people to think in the manner that pleases Allah and behave in the manner that will earn His approval. Every person also has a lower self

that urges them to follow their whims and desires. However, believers always display a sure determination to ignore their lower selves by listening only to their consciences, even if their lower self calls them to something that appears more attractive and more appealing.

Throughout their lives, the faithful make this judgment call and then select the most correct attitude. In daily life, this can mean ignoring the lower self s urging to behave selfishly by following the conscience's advice to be self-sacrificing. In the case of finishing an important task or when faced with many things at the same time, it may require a person to assist somebody who needs even more help at that specific time. Or it may require the faithful to share something that they need with someone who needs it even more, or even to give it to that person. Those who obey their conscience exhibits good behavior without hesitation. In other words, they do whatever they can to help others who need assistance. The Qur'an gives an example of this morality, as follows:

Those who were already settled in the abode and in faith, before they came, love those who emigrated to them. They do not find in their hearts any need for what they have been given, and prefer them [the emigrants! to themselves, even if they themselves are needy. Those people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves are successful. (Surat al-Hashr, 9)

This behavior of the faithful, as depicted in the Qur'an, is the result of the extreme patience they display while following their consciences.

Ignoring Satan's wiles

When Allah created Prophet Adam (as), He required all angels to prostrate to him. However, Iblis rebelled against Allah's order and refused to do so.

Faced with Satan's rebellion, Allah cast him out of Paradise and declared him cursed until the end of time. But Satan demanded that Allah allow him to tempt people to loose themselves in the allures of this world until the Day of Judgment, when they would be resurrected. Allah granted this, but also declared that Satan would have no power over His faithful servants:

He [Satan] said: "My Lord, because You misled me, I will make things on Earth seem good to them, and I will mislead them all, every one of them, except those of Your servants among them who

are sincere." He [Allah] said: "This is a Straight Path to Me. You have no authority over any of My servants, except for the misguided who follow you." (Surat al-Hijr, 39-42)

As can be seen, after Adam (as) was created, Satan began working to tempt people to stray from Allah's path. Thus, the faithful are responsible for showing patience by their continual awareness of the traps that Satan sets for them and their refusal to yield to his whispering.

Satan approaches all people with a variety of illusions and deceits. People may encounter his plots quite often in their daily lives, for Satan meets them in unexpected places. He provides them with false hopes and fears, all of which are designed to lead people into heedlessness, idleness, and postponing good works. For example, those who are trying to help the poor for Allah's approval may face such suggestions as: "If you spend what you have, later on you will have problems." Or, Satan may try to make people forget a task that will benefit Islam and the Muslims. However, they must not forget that "*Satan's scheming is always feeble.*" (Surat an-Nisa', 76).

Satan cannot influence those who display patience in maintaining their faith in our Lord, because Allah has declared that Satan can deceive and divert only those who rebel against Allah, as he himself did. In "If an evil impulse from Satan provokes you, seek refuge in Allah. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing" (Surat al-A'raf, 200), Allah calls on the faithful to take refuge in Him from Satan's wiles and deceptions.

The faithful who follow this advice spend their lives fighting Satan's games and tricks, for they understand that just as Satan's whispering is a full-time job designed to lead people to Hell, it is their full-time job to resist his whispering. If they feel any hesitation or slackness about doing something that will bring good, they take refuge in Allah and concentrate on the task with great enthusiasm. Such an understanding is mentioned in the following verse:

As for those who believe, when they are bothered by visitors from Satan, they remember and immediately see clearly. (Surat al-A'raf, 201)

Heeding Allah's advice, "*O you who believe, seek help in steadfastness and prayer. Allah is with the steadfast*" (Surat al-Baqara, 153), in order to guard themselves against Satan, they ask for our Lord's help and set their faces against Satan's deceptions, saying:

Say: "My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the goadings of the devils, and I seek refuge with You, my Lord, from their presence." (Surat al-Mu'minun, 97-98)

Unceasing adherence to a steadfast morality

Allah has placed upon everybody the responsibility for heeding the Qur'an and living out its superior morality. Thus, on the Day of Judgment people will be asked if they have followed the Qur'an's morality or not. Everyone who has ever lived, and who will ever live, has been advised of this truth and invited to conform to the morality that pleases Allah. But the only people who heed this call are those who have faith.

In those communities that are far from religion, some people may live out certain aspects of the Qur'an's morality, such as being self-sacrificing, kindhearted, merciful, just, and benevolent. But no matter how moral they claim to be, there will be moments when they display impatience. For example, a person may be late for an important business meeting for a variety of reasons, and then get caught in a traffic jam while trying to reach the meeting place. He might not be able to call his office in time to let them know that he will be late, and he might have missed the meeting by the time he finally arrives. Thus he might respond angrily or just glare and remain silent if someone else asks him a question at that very time. Even though the person in question might consider himself helpful and understanding, in such circumstances he shows that this is not the case all the time by saying that "his patience has run out."

People who do not live the Qur'an's morality are often plunged into unnecessary anger when confronted with certain events. For example, a secretary may forget to send a very important message, a child may break the most valuable object in the house, a wife may have an accident with the car that her husband has been making payments on for years, or a relative may visit at an inconvenient time, and so on. These are common occurrences, and those who do not display the Qur'an's morality might slip into rather unpleasant behavior. The reason for such behavior is their inability to show patience in living by the values that Allah prescribed.

Only those who possess the superior morality portrayed in the Qur'an can always display true patience. Their most important characteristic is the unchanging nature of their behavior. For example, one might have a very strong temper, but upon learning that Allah refers

to believers as "*those who control their rage and pardon other people*" (Surah Al 'Imran, 134), he or she exhibits forgiving behavior even when faced with an event that normally might cause them to become angry. Whatever may happen, believers continue to speak pleasantly, remain tolerant, control their anger, and show other fine moral characteristics taught by the Qur'an.

In short, what makes the believers' character superior is their consistency and patience at all times, both of which enable them to live by their high morality. The faithful try to display consistency as long as they are alive not only in pardoning other people but also in displaying self-sacrifice, humility, compassion, kindheartedness, tolerance, justice, love, and respect, and by exercising their free will, because Allah tells the faithful to be consistent in their worship: "*He is Lord of the heavens and Earth and everything in between them, so worship Him and persevere in His worship*" (Surah Maryam, 65).

Another command of Allah is to answer evil with good. The Qur'an tells the faithful to distance themselves from evil as best they can by remaining patient, as follows:

> *A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend. None will obtain it but those who are truly steadfast. None will obtain it but those who have great good fortune. (Surah Fussilat, 34-35)*

As a result of this patience and determination shown by the faithful, Allah gives them the finest reward for what they have done, and allows them to enter Paradise. He gives this news in the following verse:

> *What is with you runs out, but what is with Allah goes on forever. Those who were steadfast will be recompensed according to the best of what they did. (Surat an-Nahl, 96)*

Fearing nothing but Allah

People who have not grasped Allah's power and greatness are vulnerable to innumerable fears, among them the fear of other people, the dark, or certain numbers or colors, believing that they have an independent power of their own.

Meanwhile, the faithful know that only Allah has power and that nobody can harm or help anybody else without His permission. They are aware of the fact that no people or creatures can have power that is independent of Allah, and that everything owes its existence to Him. If they encounter some harm, they believe wholeheartedly that only our Lord can remove it. Allah tells the faithful to fear nothing but Him, as follows:

> *It was only Satan frightening you through his friends. But do not fear them—fear Me, if you are believers. (Surah Al 'Imran, 175)*

Due to their firm belief and trust in Him, the faithful experience no sadness or depression when confronted with frightening or intimidating events. Oppression or limitations do not cause them to swerve in their devotion to Him and their striving to earn His approval. The Qur'an explains this attribute, as follows:

> *Those to whom people said: "The people have gathered against you, so fear them." But that merely increased their faith, and they said: "Allah is enough for us, and [He is] the Best of Guardians." (Surah Al 'Imran, 173)*

As this verse indicates, even if the faithful are faced with pressure, they fear only Allah and show their patience by not abandoning their faith. Allah has declared that He will test His servants with fear to separate the true believers from those who have weak—or no—faith. In exchange for this, He gives the following good news to those who remain patient in their faith:

> *We will test you with a certain amount of fear and hunger and the loss of wealth, life, and fruits. But give good news to the steadfast. (Surat al-Baqara, 155)*

When faced with property damage

Allah has decorated the life of this world with many beautiful things and has created an environment from which people can derive pleasure. They are required to use the blessings showered on them in the best possible way, without becoming passionately attached to them. They realize that whatever people acquire here will remain here, and that they will have to account for their use of these blessings in our Lord's presence on the Day of Judgment. Those who understand that everything is a gift from Allah and show gratitude to Him will be rewarded, while those who forget the Day of Judgment, and so try to

seize these blessings for themselves with greed, will suffer disappointment.

In the Qur'an, Allah lists some of the many blessings that He has granted to people, as follows:

> *To mankind, the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colors: women and children, heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, horses with fine markings, and livestock and fertile farmland. All that is merely the enjoyment of the life of this world. The best homecoming is in the presence of Allah. (Surah Al 'Imran, 14)*

The faithful use these blessings in the best possible way, but at no time become addicted to them. They know that, as with everything else in the world, possessions and goods are part of the environment created to test them. Knowing that the blessings of this world are transient and that the home of the real blessings, none of which will ever be lost, is the afterlife, they have no worldly ambitions.

Since they feel neither ambition nor passion for worldly goods, they show patience whether times are good or bad. When they lose their property or it is damaged, they do not sink into sorrow or worry. If they obtain a large amount of property by working for years and then lose it all in a day, they know that Allah is testing their faith and patience. Therefore, they do not become distraught if their houses, orchards, or gardens are destroyed, or if their businesses end up going bankrupt. Despite all of these trials, they live in the comfort provided by the knowledge that Allah will ease their burdens, clear their way, conclude matters to their benefit, and reward their patience with better things in the afterlife.

People who are passionately attached to this life cannot stand it when their hard-earned property suffers any loss or damage, and SQ display rebellious behavior. Forgetting that Allah is the true owner of all property and that He can give more than He has taken away, if He so wills, they cannot see any good in such an event and so cannot show any patience.

As Allah tells us in "We will test you loss of wealth and life" (Surah Al 'Imran: 186), such tests reveal the difference between the faithful who show patience for the sake of Allah and those who pursue property and forget about the afterlife. The faithful do not grieve when they lose their property, for their only intention is to use everything they possess physically and spiritually to earn Allah's approval. In other

words, they have already devoted these possessions to Allah. In return for their devotion, they receive the following reward:

> *Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth in return for the Garden...*
>
> *... Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 111)*

Facing hunger or poverty

In addition to testing people with fear, a loss of property or then-business, or illness and other things, Allah may also test them with poverty and hunger.

However, it should be realized that Allah creates a different test for every person. For this reason, not everyone will face all of these tests in the same way and under the same conditions. In fact, Allah creates the secret of the test by sending the same test to people in a wide variety of forms and in unexpected ways. Those who have true faith and devotion are prepared to face these difficulties in all of their forms by relying on the power of their faith and their submission to Allah.

In such situations, the unbelievers' behavior is far from resignation. They forget that only Allah gives the countless blessings that they encounter in this world, and so they show Him no gratitude. In fact, if even one blessing is removed, they rebel against Allah and show ingratitude. In communities that are far from religion, one can find such examples on a regular basis. Rich people who become poor lose many blessings that Allah has bestowed upon them in the past. Ignoring the fact that their houses, cars, clothes, foods, and drinks were Allah's gifts to them, they believe that all such things belonged to them alone. Unable to learn the intended lesson and ask Allah to grant new blessings, they do not put their trust in Allah and thus turn a beneficial test against themselves.

On the other hand, those who are aware of these truths and show steadfast patience, who remain pleased with our Lord when rich or poor, hungry or fed, will be rewarded with Allah's mercy. Allah proclaims the good news that those faithful people who are grateful to Him will have their blessings increased: "*And when your Lord announced: 'If you are grateful, I will certainly give you increase. But if you are ungrateful. My punishment is severe'*" (Surah Ibrahim, 7).

The Qur'an also informs the faithful who are tested by hunger and poverty, as follows:

> *Or did you suppose that you would enter Paradise without facing the same as those who came before you? Poverty and illness afflicted them, and they were shaken to the point that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: "When is Allah's help coming?" Be assured that Allah's help is very near. (Surat al-Baqara, 214)*

Allah tells us that these people were afflicted with poverty and illness and sought refuge in His help. We must always remember that He gives the good news that for those who are patient and meet such a test with good behavior, whatever the circumstances, His help is very near at hand. We know this because He promises that while testing the faithful, He will ease their burden. This situation, as proclaimed in "For truly with hardship comes ease" (Surat al-Inshirah, 5), ensures that the faithful are pleased with what Allah has given, and that they will continue to show patience even in their darkest hours.

In the following hadith, our Prophet (saas) advises believers to be patient and trust Allah:

> *"Be mindful of Allah, [for] you will find Him before you. Get to know Allah in prosperity, and He will know you in adversity. Know that what has passed you by was not going to befall you, and that what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and ease with hardship." (Tirmidhi)*

We can see some of the finest examples of such behavior among the Prophet's (saas) Companions. In order to win Allah's approval, they remained patient on His path despite thirst, poverty, and intolerable hunger, and continued to struggle along with our Prophet (saas). Allah mentions the reward that they would receive in exchange for their superior morality, which they displayed by remaining patient in the face of exhaustion, as well as the hunger and thirst they experienced in their sweltering desert surroundings, as follows:

> *It was not for people of Madina, and the desert Arabs around them, to remain behind the Messenger of Allah or to prefer themselves to him. That is because no thirst or weariness or hunger will afflict them in the Way of Allah, nor will they take a*

single step to infuriate the unbelievers, nor to secure any gain from the enemy, without a right action being written down for them because of it. Allah does not let the wage of the good-doers go to waste. (Surat at-Tawba, 120)

As we can see, Allah announces that the patience displayed by the faithful who are being tested will be rewarded, and that none of their good acts will be overlooked, on the Day of Judgment. He also proclaims His mercy toward the faithful by describing them as those "*who [He] has preserved them from hunger and secured them from fear*" (Surah Quraysh, 4).

When struck with illness

In societies characterized by the lack of Qur'anic morality, it is considered quite normal that people's behavior will change according to circumstances. They will exhibit good behavior when they can meet all of their physical and spiritual needs easily and ensure their own comfort, but will change completely when faced with any problem that may endanger their comfort. They cannot meet even a temporary affliction with patience. This becomes very clear in the case of illness.

How people behave during times of illness, hunger, exhaustion, and similar events are clear indications as to whether they do—or do not—possess sound morality. Given this fact, difficult times are very valuable opportunities for people to prove their faith in, devotion to, and trust in our Lord. Allah states that among the conditions for true morality and true goodness is showing correct behavior by being patient in times of trouble and sickness (Surat al-Baqara, 177).

When faced with such a problem as illness, what enables the faithful to behave steadfastly and with patience is their deep attachment to and faith in Allah. Prophet Ibrahim (as) expressed this truth by saying "and when I am ill. He heals me" (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 80).

Like Prophet Ibrahim (as), believers also know that Allah creates both the illness and the cure, and so they are not seized with despair when they fall ill. On the contrary, they are grateful to our Lord for those years in which He allowed them to live in health. Understanding that a healthy life is only one of Allah's many gifts to them, they continue to behave gratefully even when they are ill.

They also continue to be extremely grateful and steadfast in cases of accident and injury. They hope that after they enter Paradise, Allah will re-create them in such a fine form that it cannot be compared with their worldly bodies. This is their hoped-for reward for their steadfast patience when confronted with various difficulties. For this reason they do not forget that whatever they have suffered here will entitle them to a great recompense in the afterlife.

Those who are precluded from having faith, due to their attachment to the world, cannot show patience in the face of such events and so sink into great hopelessness and grief. For example, those with crippled limbs say that they would rather die than live with such a body; some even try to commit suicide. Believing that this life is the only one that they have, they think that living with certain defects and deficiencies makes life meaningless. Even if they do not try to commit suicide, they develop a very unpleasant personality and try to create problems for those around them. Whether they accept their situation or not, there is no way that they can avert such an event. If they put their trust in Allah, however, they may hope that He will allow them to be reborn in Paradise with a brand new body that is flawless, imperishable, and cannot be damaged. But if they do not trust in Allah, their present life and their future life in the Hereafter will be destroyed, for their ignorance will cause them to rebel against Allah and be "rewarded" with Hell.

The behavior of those who live the Qur'an's morality is completely different. When they are injured, lose an organ, or experience a similar disaster, their behavior does not change. Knowing that they are being tested and that the

end result will be positive, they remain patient and do their best to earn Allah's approval. Even if they can no longer make any physical effort to realize this goal, they try to develop ideas that can benefit people and remind them of the Hereafter.

Those who turn away from Allah when they become ill or when they are injured are not aware of their great error, for only Allah can heal them or rescue them from their illness. Doctors, medicines, and treatments can be provided only with Allah's permission. Understanding this, the faithful face their illness with patience and patiently ask Him for a cure. They also make the best possible use of doctors, medicines, and treatments, and always remember that these will be of benefit only if Allah wills it.

The Qur'an gives the example of Prophet Ayyub (as), who always sought refuge in Allah when faced with illness. Allah praises his morality, as follows: "We found him steadfast What an excellent servant! He truly turned to his Lord" (Surah Sad, 44). His patience and devotion to Allah are described, as follows:

> *And Ayyub, when he called out to his Lord, [said]: "Great harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." We responded to him and removed from him the harm that was afflicting him, restored his family to him and the same again with them, as a mercy direct from Us and a Reminder to all worshippers. (Surat al-Anbiya', 83-84)*

The superior morality shown by Prophet Ayyub (as) when he was faced with this situation can be understood from his sincere prayer to Allah. When he was in trouble

and sick, he turned to Allah with steadfastness and patience, knowing that only He can achieve anything and without forgetting that he is subject to Allah's mercy and compassion.

As we can see in these and all other cases, Allah helps those who are patient. One verse expresses this assistance, as follows:

And be steadfast. Allah is with the steadfast. (Surat al-Anfal, 46)

When facing injustice

Those who do not follow the Qur'an's morality cannot exercise true justice, because they do not consider that they will have to account for all of their actions in the afterlife, and so feel no need to be scrupulous in this matter. Since they follow their earthly desires rather than their consciences, they make impulsive, instead of rational, decisions. When they become angry, they immediately succumb to their anger and seek revenge. When a situation threatens their advantages, they do not hesitate to behave unjustly to protect their own interests. Such acts fill the newspapers and the television newscasts. Someone attacks his boss when he is fired, slanders somebody who has interfered with her business, spreads malicious gossip about his fiancee who broke up with him, or responds to a person who threatens her with even worse threats. We meet such people all the time. They respond to a bad act or an injustice in the same manner and violate the morality called for by the Qur'an. Indeed, sometimes people may even try to kill those who have interfered with their interests.

The faithful may be subjected to the unjust behavior of such people as part of their lifelong test. Unlike those given as examples above, they do not respond to injustice with injustice or to wrongdoing with more wrongdoing. But this does not mean that they stand by idly and do nothing to fight such injustice. However, rather than making rash decisions and jumping to conclusions, they act at all times in a well-balanced manner that comes from their trust in Allah.

Their patience and steadfastness in such cases springs from their awareness that Allah controls everything and possesses eternal justice. Allah tells us that on the Day of Judgment, everybody will have to account for what they did while in this world, and that no injustice will be done to them. Hence, those who committed injustice thoughtlessly or behaved in an unfair manner will receive their "reward" on that day. Allah's eternal justice is described, as follows:

> *We will set up the Just Balance on the Day of Rising, and no one will be wronged in any way. Even if it is no more than the weight of a grain of a mustard-seed. We will produce it. We are sufficient as a Reckoner. (Surat al-Anbiya', 47)*

> *There are only grounds against those who wrong people and act as tyrants in the land without any right to do so. Such people will have a painful punishment. (Surat ash-Shura, 42)*

> *Have fear of a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every self will be paid in full for what it earned. They will not be wronged. (Surat al-Baqara, 281)*

Thus the faithful who know this law of Allah are patient in the face of injustice, thanks to the serenity that they have inside themselves. In the following verse, Allah promises that in exchange for this patience, He will bring help:

Allah will certainly help those who help Him—Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj, 40)

The Qur'an relates that Prophet Yusuf (as) faced many injustices throughout his life, but that because of his devotion and patience, Allah helped him and gave him strength. All that happened to him from his childhood onward was designed to test his patience and that of his father, Prophet Ya'qub (as). First, Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown into a* well by his jealous brothers. After this, a passing caravan found him and took him to Egypt, were he was sold as a slave. The Qur'an speaks of Prophet Yaᵛqub's (as) patience when confronted with this event, and of his request to Allah for help against this plot:

They then produced his shirt with false blood on it. He [Ya'qub] said: "It is merely that your lower selves have suggested something to you which you did, but beauty lies in showing steadfastness. Allah alone is my Help in the face of the event you describe." (Surah Yusuf, 18)

In addition to this, Prophet Yusuf (as) was slandered by the wife of his master, the Egyptian vizier. Even though his innocence was perfectly clear, Prophet Yusuf (as) was thrown into prison, where he remained unjustly imprisoned for many years. However, he never forgot that Allah was

testing him and so took refuge in Him, asked for His help, and exhibited outstanding patience. He did not forget that Allah will eventually confound the schemes of the unbelievers and that the faithful will be successful. In return for his steadfast devotion and patience, Allah gave him blessings that would please him both in this world and in the afterlife:

The king said: "Bring him to me straight away, so that I may draw him very close to me." When he had spoken with him, he [the king] declared: "Today you are trusted, established in our sight." He [Yusuf] said: "Entrust the treasures of the land to me, for in truth I am a knowing guardian." Thus We established Yusuf in the land so that he could live in any place he pleased. We grant Our grace to anyone We will, and do not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good. But the wages of the

Hereafter are the best for people who believe and have done their duty. (Surah Yusuf, 54-57)

Years after these events, Allah brought Prophet Yusuf (as) face-to-face with his treacherous brothers. He stated his faith in Allah, despite the injustice that he had suffered, and the compassion that Allah showed him, as follows:

They asked: "Are you Yusuf?" He said: "I am indeed Yusuf, and this here is my brother. Allah has acted graciously to us. As for those who do their duty and are steadfast, Allah does not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good." (Surah Yusuf, 90)

All of this material related in the Qur'an about Prophet Yusuf (as) is an important example of the ultimate hidden causes that can be revealed by patience, because the help that Allah gave to him is equally available for those who are faithful. Allah thwarts the plots devised for the faithful and responds to the injustices committed against them.

Encountering slander and hurtful words

Allah says that among the tests believers may face are troubling statements made by the unbelievers, as follows:

> *You will hear many abusive words from those given the Book before you, and from those who are unbelievers. But if you are steadfast and guard against evil, that is the most resolute course to take. (Surah Al 'Imran, 186)*

All Prophets throughout history have met with slander and accusations from the peoples to whom they were sent. In particular, the leaders of these people who deny faith take the lead in such behavior and try to incite the unbelievers against the believers. The most important reason for this is that the true religion offers a moral code that may deprive them of some worldly advantages that they obtained by unjust means. Since they hold a superior position in their communities in terms of wealth, rank, and status, they can easily exploit their people and convince them that injustice and wrongdoing are reasonable.

The Qur'an's morality requires people to be honest, just, and helpful toward the poor. Thus, because these leaders regard this characteristic of the faith as a danger to

their worldly interests, they attempt to blacken the reputation of the faithful who attempt to spread religious morality and thereby make them unsuccessful.

We can see one of the clearest examples of this in the behavior of Pharaoh, who enslaved and abused the children of Israel. Allah sent Prophet Musa (as) as a savior to these people, who were exploited and forced to work in very arduous conditions. Pharaoh, observing that the true religion instructed him to behave justly, mercifully, and with a good conscience toward the children of Israel, tried to discredit Prophet Musa (as) and his followers in the people's eyes. By doing this, he thought that nobody would respect the religion preached by Prophet Musa (as) and that a danger to his own interests would thereby be averted. He also hoped that such slander would destroy the believers' morale and that they might abandon their efforts to spread the faith. The Qur'an relates some of these slanders, as follows:

We sent Musa with Our Signs and clear authority to Pharaoh,

Haman, and Qarun. But they said: "A lying magician." (Surat al-Mu'min, 23-24)

But he turned away with his forces, saying: "A magician or a madman!" (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 39)

What Pharaoh and his circle said to Prophet Musa (as) was not unique to them, for all Prophets and Messengers whom Allah sent to teach His religion face the same accusations of lying and sorcery, being madmen or poets, or seeking profit for themselves. The fact that the faithful always have the same insulting words thrown at

them, regardless of time or place, is not coincidental. On the contrary, these are tests that Allah created to observe their patience and steadfastness.

The Qur'an tells us of such situations, as follows:

Equally, no Messenger came to those before them without their saying: "A magician or a madman!" (Surat adh-Dhariyat, 52)

Allah tells us that such insults were hurled at Prophet Muhammad (saas) and his Companions:

When they are told: "Believe in the way that the people believe," they exclaim: "What! Are we to believe in the way that fools believe?" No indeed! They are the fools, but they do not know it. (Surat al-Baqara, 13)

The ruling circle of those of his people who did not believe said:

"We do not see you as anything but a human being like ourselves. We do not see anyone following you but the lowest of us, unthinkingly. We do not see you as superior to us. On the contrary, we consider you to be liars." (Surah Hud, 27)

They say: "You, to whom the Reminder [the Qur'anl has been sent down, are clearly mad." (Surat al-Hijr, 6)

They are surprised that a warner should come to them from among themselves. The unbelievers say: "This is a lying magician." (Surah Sad, 4)

When they were told, "There is no god but Allah," they were arrogant. They said, "Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?" (Surat as-Saffat, 35-36)

Faced with all of these slanders, Allah's Prophets and pious servants behaved with outstanding patience, took refuge in Him, and asked for His help. The Qur'an gives the following example of this:

Say: "Lord, judge with truth! Our Lord is the All-Merciful, the One Whose help is sought in the face of what you describe." (Surat al-Anbiya', 112)

In the Qur'an, Allah responds to the behavior of the unbelievers who seek to abuse the Prophets, as follows:

Remind them then! For, by the blessing of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman. (Surat at-Tur, 29) Do not obey the unbelievers and hypocrites, and disregard their abuse of you. Put your trust in Allah. Allah suffices as a Protector. (Surat al-Ahzab, 48)

As stated above, Allah points out that He expects the faithful to live by the Qur'an's morality regardless of what difficulties they may encounter, and to keep advising and reminding people about the faith. Thus, the faithful ignore all such behavior and move forward with devotion, patience, and true knowledge. In fact, without knowing it, the unbelievers' behavior only strengthens the believers' faith and increases the joy and excitement they feel about their religion.

Proclaiming their religion

In the Qur'an, Allah informs us of the Prophets' life-long patience in order to show us how to live a life of superior morality. This is a great blessing for those who believe and seek the road to Him.

During their lives, the Prophets informed their household members and relatives, as well as the people at large, about Allah's religion. While inviting people to the true faith, every Prophet gained a number of enemies and suffered from their verbal and physical assaults. But such assaults could not weaken them; rather, they passed their whole lives showing patience and determination in preaching Allah's religion.

One of these Messengers was Prophet Ibrahim (as). Throughout his life, he was tested by various incidents that demanded patience. Despite all of the unfavorable incidents that Allah set before him, he always displayed devotion, submission, and great patience. For example, his people, who worshipped stone idols, tried to burn him alive for inviting them to the true faith and Allah, the One. The Qur'an recounts this test, as follows:

> *They said: "We heard a young man mentioning them. They call him Ibrahim." They said: "Bring him before the people's eyes so they can be witnesses." (Surat al-Anbiya', 60-61) They said: "Build a pyre for him and fling him into the blaze!" They tried to outwit him, but We made them the lowest. He said: "I am going toward*

my Lord; He will be my guide." (Surat as-Saffat, 97-99)

As stated above, Prophet Ibrahim's (as) tribe wanted to cast him into the fire. However, in exchange for his display of patience and devotion, Allah protected him by ordering the fire to become "coolness and peace for him," as follows:

We said: "Fire, be coolness and peace for Ibrahim!" They desired to trap him, but We made them the losers. (Surat al-Anbiya', 69-70)

This incident is a help to Allah's servants who are patient and steadfast for Him, and it is one of the finest examples of what great blessings our Lord can grant to Muslims in return for their patience.

Prophet Ibrahim's (as) life story contains many other examples of patience and devotion, for he continued to announce Allah's existence and invite people to embrace the true faith until the end of his life. Even though no member of his tribe responded to his call, Prophet Ibrahim (as) never abandoned his mission and thereby showed great patience. He obeyed Allah's instructions in this matter and, while showing great effort and determination, continued to summon people to the faith. We can see his sincerity in the following verse:

Remember when he said to his father: "Father, why do you worship that which can neither hear nor see and is of no use to you at all? Father, knowledge that never reached you has come to me, so follow me and I will guide you to the right path. Father, do not worship

Satan. Satan was disobedient to the All-Merciful. Father, I am afraid that a punishment from the All-Merciful will afflict you, and turn you into a comrade of Satan." He said: "Do you forsake my gods, Ibrahim? If you do not stop, I will stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time." (Surah Maryam, 42-46)

Another Prophet who made a patient and determined effort to explain Allah's religion to his people was Prophet Nuh (as). He approached his people in many different ways, but could not make them believe. Even though his people rejected him and put a great deal of pressure on him to make him stop preaching Allah's religion, all of their efforts failed, for he remained patient and put all of his trust in Allah. The Qur'an proclaims his outstanding patience while communicating Allah's religion, as follows:

Before them, the people of Nuh denied the truth. They denied Our servant, saying: "He is madman," and he was driven away with jeers. (Surat al-Qamar, 9)

He said: "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, but my calling has only made them more evasive. Indeed, every time I called them to Your forgiveness, they put their fingers in their ears, wrapped themselves up in their clothes, and were over weeningly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I addressed them publicly and privately." (Surah Nuh, 5-9)

Certainly these examples can teach a lesson to all Muslims today. By sending the Qur'an to inform us of these

events, Allah instructs us never to abandon our patience and always to follow the Prophets' examples of patience.

> *So be steadfast as the Messengers, with firm resolve, were also steadfast. (Surat al-Ahqaf, 35)*

Just as among the tribes of old, it is possible that now and in the future believers will encounter similar situations and people who know nothing of religion, deny the faith, and have only a limited ability to comprehend it. In every age there may be people who deny Allah's existence and the afterlife. Muslims are required to explain to all people His existence and the truth of creation without becoming tired of doing so. They may encounter people who say: "I'm an atheist and so reject Allah's existence," feigning ignorance of all of the truths or scientific proofs that have been explained to them. Or some people may be unable to save themselves from the negative effects of the surrounding ignorant society and thus find it hard to understand the truths that are explained to them. In such a situation, being steadfast in preaching religion by trying every method, like Prophet Nuh (as), and taking all kinds of risks, like Prophet Ibrahim (as), are very important forms of worship, because strong patience in explaining the faith may help some people see the light and be saved in the afterlife.

Believers undertake this important service with the sole intention of helping to improve the afterlife of those around them, and they carry it out with great patience and no expectation of reward in this world. Of course, Muslims will not go unrewarded for this sincere effort in this world or the next, which they undertake regardless of the real or potential obstacles. Even if their efforts do not cause one

person to embrace the faith, Allah will give them beauty and serenity in this world and great rewards in the afterlife.

The benefits of Patience

> *Truly man is in loss – except for those who believe and do right actions and urge each other to the truth and steadfastness. (Surat al-'Asr,2-3)*

As Allah tells us in this verse, people who encourage one another to follow the truth and be steadfast receive various benefits. Patience develops people in many ways, such as allowing them to acquire superior morality, and offers them a beautiful and peaceful life that cannot be compared with the life of people who are far from the faith. In addition, believers have been promised greatly increased blessings in the afterlife in return for their patience. We list some of these fine and beautiful things, which are experienced in this world and the next, as follows:

Patience leads to intelligence

One of the major factors preventing people from acting intelligently is their impulsive thinking and behavior brought about by impatience. Sudden anger or desire shuts down the mind and pushes people to act without thinking. In the same way, such feelings as fear and irritation may prevent people from thinking logically and intelligently. People who do not live by the Qur'an's understanding of patience fall victim to such emotions for long periods of time and so become separated from intelligence.

However, the believers who always remain patient, as Allah counsels them, acquire great blessings, one of

which is intelligence. As a result, they do not suffer from sudden fear, nervousness, or emotional excess. This enables them to evaluate all events in a calm and self-possessed manner and thereby arrive at the most intelligent conclusions and the most beneficial decisions.

Even more important, this patience allows the faithful to follow all of the Qur'an's teachings in the best possible way. Since believers always behave patiently, they have the opportunity to act only after evaluating events in light of the Qur'an's teaching. Those who follow the Qur'an are directed toward the true path of Allah and toward the finest behavior. For these reasons, following the Qur'an in the best possible way enables believers to gain the superior intelligence that derives from its wisdom.

Patience ensures subtle thought and the ability to see details

Another important characteristic of patience is that it enables the believers to see details that people cannot see right away, and thus helps them to use their intelligence. Impatient people want to solve everything right away and are not very interested in details. Consequently, they miss details that may be quite important and so make wrong decisions. In the same way, they cannot see the situation in which others around them find themselves, are incapable of noticing their needs, and so exhibit thoughtless behavior characterized by a lack of humaneness.

The faithful, always remaining patient, do not succumb to unnecessary haste while solving a problem. Understanding that haste is a primary factor of people's inability to use their intelligence and think correctly, they consider all details and make accurate decisions. Knowing

how to act according to their intelligence without rushing, believers proceed intelligently, easily see those complexities that might be invisible to others, and thus adopt the most correct behavior.

Patience ensures the ability to do good

Patience enables people to overcome many of their bad characteristics and hence to discover good behavior. However, we must never forget that this is unique to believers. Those who do not fear Allah and forget that they will be recompensed in the afterlife for the morality they displayed in this world do not try to overcome their bad characteristics. As long as a worldly advantage is dangled in front of them, they can see no reason to alter their behavior. For example, if someone's elderly mother-in-law falls ill and that person has to move into her house to take care of her, he or she will need a great deal of patience. But those who cannot grasp the concept of Qur'anic patience can tolerate such a situation only for a short time. In a little while, that person begin to think ways of getting rid of this situation, and then says out loud: "Let's put her in a nursing home, because I can't look after her." Or an unbeliever's spouse has an accident, becomes bedridden, and requires intensive treatment and care. In such a situation, the other spouse will care for him or her for a while, perhaps to avoid the neighbors' criticism if they do not do so or for some other reason, but again only for a limited time. After this time, the spouse may abandon the other because he or she has no patience when it comes to self-sacrifice for others.

As for the faithful, they have an inner awe of Allah and know that they will find in the afterlife beauty and

blessings commensurate to what they have done for Him. For this reason, they show determination and patience by always behaving well and making a serious effort. Thus they purge themselves of all bad characteristics and find the opportunity to turn these into good characteristics.

Patience ensures just behavior

By proclaiming that *"Allah commands you to return to their owners the things you hold on trust and, when you judge between people, to judge with justice. How excellent is what Allah exhorts you to do! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing"* (Surat an-Nisa: 58), Allah states that He expects the faithful to behave justly. Aware of this command, the believers do not deviate from honesty and justice. In order for them to live this superior morality, their greatest aid is patience, a characteristic that they gain from adhering to the Qur'an's teachings.

Those who are expected to ensure justice must not give way to their emotions, succumb to anger, or act from such motives as hatred and revenge. When they encounter such a situation, they must display serious patience. Allah informs us of this, as follows:

> *O you who believe, show integrity for the sake of Allah, bearing witness with justice. Do not let hatred for a people incite you to injustice. Be just. That is closer to heedfulness. Heed Allah. Allah is aware of what you do. (Surat al-Ma'ida, 8)*

Patience gives believers a trustworthy character

All Prophets have said these words to the peoples to whom they were sent:

Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger. (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 143)

That they sought to define themselves in these terms as a priority arises from their awareness of just how important it is to be trustworthy in the people's eyes. This quality can be seen also in other believers, for adhering to the Qur'an's concept of superior morality and patience enables them to acquire all of the characteristics required for trustworthiness. In addition to patience, the believers also are intelligent, truthful, just, and moderate; free of hatred, anger, and untruthfulness; and balanced. Thus it is possible for people to know what the believers will do at any time and how they will react to events. While unbelievers exhibit an unbalanced character by reacting to events in unexpected, surprising, and disturbing ways, the faithful never behave in such a way. In fact, this is one of the reasons for their trustworthiness.

Most important, their continual patience at all times allows them to behave with determination in displaying this fine characteristic as long as they are alive. They make no concession to worldly profit in their behavior, a trait that pleases Allah. All of these elements together, along with living in a consistent manner, make the faithful the most trustworthy of all people.

Patience gives a person a cheerful and peaceful character

For people who have no faith in Allah, being sad, bored, or upset is a quite normal condition, for they ignore the facts that Allah controls everyone and everything,

creates all events for a reason, can answer our prayers to Him whenever He wills to do so, and keeps everything in His power. Unaware of these truths, such people react to an apparently unfavorable development by immediately giving way to hopelessness and sorrow. The Qur'an mentions this characteristic of the unbelievers, as follows:

> *When We give people a taste of mercy, they rejoice in it. But when something bad happens to them because of what they themselves have done, they immediately lose all hope. (Surat ar-Rum, 36)*

The faithful, on the other hand, never lose their hope in Allah, for He has infinite power and keeps everything in the universe under His control. He is the Friend, Guardian, and Helper of the faithful. He protects, guards, and gives ease to those who take refuge in Him.

The believers who can appreciate Allah's greatness and boundless mercy take refuge in Him with patience and trust, regardless of the difficulties, problems, or events that they may be experiencing. As a result, they never lose any of their cheerfulness and tranquility, even when experiencing their most difficult moments, for they know that Allah will give them a fine recompense in Paradise for the patience they displayed in this world. Therefore, they live their lives in great joy and enthusiasm.

Those who cannot show patience when confronted with adversities are condemned to spend their worldly lives in unhappiness. Allah points out that they will be unhappy in the afterlife as well. The Qur'an describes the rewards that those who are patient (the believers) and those who are

impatient and therefore rebellious toward Allah (the unbelievers) will receive in the afterlife, as follows:

> *On the Day it comes, no one will speak except with His permission. Some of them will be wretched and others will be glad. As for those who are wretched, they will be in the Fire, where they will sigh and gasp, remaining in it timelessly, forever, as long as the heavens and Earth endure, except as your Lord wills. Your Lord is the Doer of what He wills. As for those who are glad, they will be in Paradise, remaining in it timelessly, forever, as long as the heavens and Earth endure, except as your Lord wills. An uninterrupted gift. (Surah Hud, 105-108)*

The wonderful life Allah promises to the faithful

Throughout this book, we have stated that Allah tests the faithful in various ways. However, this should not be taken to mean that they live difficult or troubled lives. On the contrary, the faithful live the best lives in this world because Allah places serenity and peace in their hearts on account of their continuous patience and devotion. This blessing is exclusive to the faithful, for it cannot be obtained with money or status, or by means of any of the other opportunities that the world has to offer. So many people who appear to be living in comfort feel none of the serenity and peace that Allah grants to the patient. They could not feel such feelings even if they somehow managed to offer all of the wealth in the world or mobilize all of its resources,

because Allah places these feelings only in the hearts of the faithful:

He sent down serenity into the hearts of the believers, thereby increasing their faith with more faith—the legions of the heavens and Earth belong to Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Surat al-Fath, 4)

As a result, the believers never succumb to worry, concern, or unhappiness when they encounter difficulty and hardship.

In return for their unconditional submission, patience, and pleasant acceptance of everything that our Lord sends to them, Allah tells them that He will give them a beautiful life in the world:

Anyone who acts rightly, male or female, being a believer, We will give them a good life and recompense them according to the best of what they did. (Surat an-Nahl, 97)

As for those who do their duty and are steadfast, Allah does not allow to go to waste the wage of any people who do good.

(Surah Yusuf, 90)

When those who have done their duty are asked: "What has your Lord sent down?" their reply is: "Good!" There is good in this world for those who do good, and the abode of the Hereafter is even better. How wonderful is the abode of those who guard against evil. (Surat an-Nahl, 30)

Say: "Servants of Mine who believe, heed your Lord. For those who do good in this world there is good, and

Allah's Earth is spacious. The steadfast will be paid their wages in full without any reckoning." (Surat az-Zumar, 10)

The believers' reward for being patient is Paradise

People who are bound to Allah in their hearts dedicate their goods and lives, in short everything they own, to our Lord and are patient in order to earn His approval in both good and bad times. None of the troubles, pressures, and difficulties they experience in this world can prevent them from living according to Allah's religion, because they are devoted firmly and only to Him and show patience and determination for as long as they live.

The finest reward that the faithful can obtain in the afterlife for this outstanding patience is Allah's love, generosity, and approval:

Allah has promised the male and female believers Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever, and fine dwellings in the Gardens of Eden. And Allah's good pleasure is even greater. That is the great victory. (Surat at-Tawba, 72)

Their Lord gives them the good news of His mercy, good pleasure, and Gardens in which they will enjoy everlasting delight. (Surat at-Tawba, 21)

Their reward is with their Lord: Gardens of Eden with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, forever and ever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for those who fear their Lord. (Surat al-Bayyina, 8)

Allah's patient servants will be met in a Paradise of boundless beauty due to the angels' greetings of peace and good wishes, and through all eternity they will never leave it. Angels announce that these eternal blessings are the reward for their patience, as follows: Gardens of Eden that they will enter, and all of their parents, wives, and children who were righteous. Angels will enter in to welcome them from every gate: *"Peace be upon you because of your steadfastness! How wonderful is the Ultimate Abode!"* (Surat ar-Ra'd, 23-24)

To those people who display a great determination to exhibit a fine morality throughout their lives, remaining steadfast in times of difficulty, and exhibiting behavior pleasing to Him, Allah multiplies their rewards many times over:

> *They will be given their reward twice over, because they have been steadfast... (Surat al-Qasas, 54)*

Those believers regarded as worthy of Paradise will find there everything that their hearts desire. They will live in eye-catching mansions, sitting on couches of striking beauty and exquisite quilts and rugs, and will be together forever with the Prophets and the righteous believers. This is a definite reality that Allah has promised to believers in return for their patience. For these reasons, He calls upon them to compete for His approval and for Paradise while living in this world: "Race each other to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden [i.e., Paradise] as wide as the heavens and Earth, prepared for the people who guard against evil" (Surah Al Tmran, 133). In other verses, He brings the good news to the faithful, as follows:

Such people will be repaid for their steadfastness with the Highest Paradise, where they will meet with welcome and with "Peace." (Surat al-Furqan, 75)

Today I have rewarded them for being steadfast. They are the ones who are victorious. (Surat al-Mu'minun, 111)

The Secrets of Patience

... And be steadfast. Allah is with the steadfast.
(Surat al-Anfal, 46)

The Qur'an guides people to the ways of peace and teaches them what they previously did not know. It informs them of all the secrets of worldly life and the afterlife. One of the secrets that people can learn only from it is patience. Patience is not just one part of upstanding morality; rather, it is an important path by which the faithful are guided to Allah's mercy.

Allah grants unexpected blessings to His faithful servants who show patience while dealing with the troubles that befall them and who live in full the Qur'an's morality and carry out His commands.

The Qur'an informs us of Allah's promised blessings to Muslims who show patience, as follows:

In showing patience, small communities may, with Allah's permission, defeat large communities

When Talut marched out with the army, he said: "Allah will test you with a river. Anyone who drinks from it is not with me. But anyone who does not taste it is with me—except for him who merely scoops up a little in his hand." But they drank from it—except for a few of them. Then when he and those who believe with him had crossed it, they said: "We do not have the strength to face

Goliath and his troops today". But those who were sure that they were going to meet Allah said: "How many a small force has triumphed over a much greater one by Allah's permission! Allah is with the steadfast". (Surat al-Baqara, 249)

Traps cannot harm those who remain steadfast and guard against evil

If something good happens to you, it galls them. If something bad strikes you, they rejoice at it. But if you are steadfast and guard against evil, their scheming will not harm you in any way. Allah encompasses what they do. (Surah Al 'Imran, 120)

Allah promises to aid His servants, who are steadfast and guard against evil, with His angels

Yes indeed! But if you are steadfast and guard against evil, and they come upon you suddenly, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly identified. (Surah Al 'Imran, 125)

Allah multiplies the strength of the faithful

O Prophet! Spur on the believers to fight. If twenty of you are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a hundred of you, they will overcome a thousand of those who do not believe, because they are people who do not understand. Now Allah has made it lighter on you, knowing that there is weakness in you. If a hundred of you are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are a thousand of you, they will overcome two thousand with Allah's permission. Allah is with the steadfast. (Surat al-Anfal, 65-66)

Allah keeps His promises to the patient

And We bequeathed to the people who had been oppressed the easternmost part of the land We had blessed, and its westernmost part as well. The most excellent Word of your Lord was fulfilled for the tribe of Israel on account of their steadfastness. And We utterly destroyed what Pharaoh and his people made and the buildings they constructed. (Surat al-A'raf, 137)

The Prayers of the Faithful for Patience

Musa said to his people: "Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. Earth belongs to Allah. He bequeaths it to any of His servants He wills. The successful outcome is for those who guard against evil." (Surat al-A'raf, 128)

In one verse, *"If My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. They should therefore respond to Me and believe in Me so that hopefully they will be rightly guided"* (Surat al-Baqara, 186), Allah calls upon the faithful to pray to Him about anything because He loves His servants and has mercy on them. When His servants fall into trouble, Allah eases their lot and brings them peace. The Qur'an speaks of Allah's help to the faithful, as follows:

> *He calls down blessing on you, as do His angels, to bring you out of the darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful to believers. (Surat al-Ahzab, 43)*

The faithful, who realize what an important place patience has in living a moral life and carrying out Allah's instructions, pray to Him about everything, including patience. They know that patience is a blessing that can solve all kinds of problems, directs them toward the true

path, and, most importantly, earns them Allah's love and Paradise.

The Qur'an contains prayers of the faithful informing Allah that they desire patience. By asking Him to "pour down steadfastness upon us," they draw attention to the greatness of people's need for patience:

> *You are only avenging yourself on us because we believed in our Lord's Signs when they came to us. Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us and take us back to You as Muslims. (Surat al-A'raf, 126)*

> *When they came out against Talut and his troops, they said: "Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us, make our feet firm, and help us against this unbelieving people." (Surat al-Baqara, 250)*

The believers' prayers for patience, as recorded in the Qur'an, also remind us of how necessary it is to ask for Allah's help in this matter. Right from the beginning of this book, we have stressed that Allah helps those who are patient and who patiently ask for His help, and that He has promised to multiply their blessings. One of the most important characteristics that a person needs is patience, so that he or she can confront all of this life's difficulties, problems, and troubles with the joy of faith and the excitement of earning Allah's approval. These inner characteristics help the believer to have the upper hand, with Allah's permission, and ensure their success. Allah has given this secret of patience to the faithful and told them to be patient, pray for patience, and display patience.

Essence of the Discourse

In one verse, Allah describes the believers with these words: *"Those who listen well to what is said and follow the best of it, they are the ones whom Allah has guided, they are the people of intelligence"* (Surat az-Zumar, 18). Truly the faithful have intelligence and, consequently, heed His words and do their best.

In addition, we have used various examples from the Qur'an to point out that patience is one of the most important elements forming the foundation of superior morality and opening the door to countless blessings in this world and the next. We have invited all people of intelligence to be patient, in the full Quranic meaning of the word, and have brought the good news that people who adhere to morality and who always display a strong patience in order to earn Allah's approval will be rewarded in this world and in the afterlife.

Now, after all of these explanations, we conclude by reminding the readers that the finest reward a person can obtain in this world and the next is Allah's approval and mercy, and His Paradise. Such wonders cannot be compared with any of this world's pleasures and blessings. One way of gaining His love is to be aware of Allah's wisdom and bounty in every event, word, and act, and to trust in Allah, for the Qur'an tells us that He loves those who trust Him and show patience in all circumstances:

How many of the Prophets fought [in Allah's way], and with them [fought! large bands of godly men? But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in Allah's way, nor did they weaken (in will) or give in. And Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast. (Surah Al 'Imran, 146)

For these reasons, Allah declares that the faithful should race each other to acquire this morality: *"O you who believe, persevere in patience and constancy, vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other, and heed Allah, so that hopefully you will be successful"* (Surah Al 'Imran, 200).

In addition, remember that life comes and goes just as quickly for those who live morally as for those who do not. Those who exhibit impatience when facing the tests that Allah creates while they are in this world, who revolt against them by becoming impatient, and who are not constant in their morality and worship one day will die and find themselves between Heaven and Hell. Those who choose patience and surrender to Destiny spend their temporary life here in the finest possible way and will enter Paradise due to their trust in Allah. Those who spend their life being impatient, and complaining about their difficulties and troubles will find themselves in the darkness of Hell, just as they lived here in the darkness of irreligion, and will realize that they have sacrificed eternal life for a short temporary life on Earth.

Unconditional Submission to the Will of Allah

Rida is of two kinds

One is willingness to carry out what God has commanded and refrain from what He has forbidden; this is a duty. The other is to resign oneself to suffering poverty, illness, etc.; this is commendable. Only sabr in it, or bearing it patiently is obligatory. As for resignation (rida) to unfaith, immorality and sin, it is forbidden. No Believer should resign himself to them in any situation. Many theologians and Sufis have entertained wrong ideas in this matter. Below is a refutation of those ideas.

Rida is of two kinds: One is willingness to do what God has commanded and to refrain from what He has forbidden. This includes the use of things which God has allowed without entering, however, into anything forbidden. God has said, "It is more fitting that they should seek the pleasure of God and His Messenger" (9:62); or, "If only they had been content with what God and His Messenger gave them, and had said, 'Sufficient unto us is God;

God and His Messenger will soon give us of His bounty. To God do we turn our hopes'" (9:59). This kind of assent is obligatory. That is why God has condemned those who fail in it: "Among them are men who slander you in the

matter of (the distribution of) the alms. If they are given part thereof, they are pleased, but if not, behold, they are indignant. If they had been content with what God and His Messenger gave them, and had said, 'Sufficient unto us is God; God and His Messenger will soon give us of His bounty. To God we rum our hopes'" (9:58-9).

The second kind of *rida* is to resign oneself to all types of suffering, such as poverty, illness or humiliation. One opinion is that this resignation is commendable, another is that it is obligatory. The correct view is that it is *sabr,* or patiently bearing, those sufferings that is obligatory. Al-Hasan[639] said, "Indeed resignation *(rida)* is very difficult; the believer must take to patience." Ibn 'Abbas has reported these words of the Prophet: "If you can carry on willingly and with conviction, go ahead; but if not, then patiently bear the things you do not like; it is a great good."[640]

But as for resigning' oneself to unbelief, immorality and sin, the *a'immah* of the religion do not approve; God does not approve of them. He has said, "He does not like ingratitude and faithlessness from His people" (39:9); "Allah does not like disbelief (2:205); "But if you are pleased with them God is not pleased with those who disobey" (9:96); "If a man kill a Believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein, and the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him" (4:93); "This (is) because they followed that which called forth the wrath of God, and they hated God's good pleasure, so He made their deeds of no effect" (47:28); "God has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the rejecters of faith, the Fire of Hell. Therein shall they dwell, sufficient is it for them" (9:68); 'Evil indeed are (the works) which their souls have sent forward before them (with the result) that God's wrath is on them, and in torment will they abide" (5:83); and, "When at length they provoked Us , We exacted retribution

from them, and We drowned them all" (43:55). Since what they were doing did not please God rather it angered Him, His wrath and curse fell upon them How could one not dislike them and condemn them just as God has condemned them.

Two groups of people have developed wrong ideas about *rida* One group which consists of those who claim to follow the heir controversy with the Qadariyyah, have come to view that God's love or wrath or disapproval should be reduced to His will, even though, in opposition to the Qadariyyah they do believe that God wills everything that happens in the world. Buy they say that He also loves what He wills. Having said that, they begin misinterpreting the texts. For example, they say that the verse, "God does not love mischief (2:205), only means that He does not will it, or does not want the Believers to will it; or the verse He is not pleased with the faithlessness of His servants" (29:7), sinlly means that He does not want the Believers to do u This is a serious mistake. In their view these statements are just like saying that He does not like faith or is not pleased with faith, that is to say, He does not will that the infidels have faith or that like it that they should believe. The *ummah,* on the other hand agreed that whatever God enjoins is loved by Him, and may either be incumbent upon us or desirable for us to do whether or not we do it. For a details on this point one should look to other places.

The second group consists of certain Sufis who have gone astray. They perceive the order of things and exclaim "that God is the Lord of the whole universe, and that He determines everything and wills it, so they cannot but say that they are pleased with everything which He ordains and brings into being, even if it be faithlessness, immorality, or sin. Some even want to say that love is a fire which burns

out everything in the heart except the will of the Beloved, and since He has willed the whole universe, it is to be loved in its entirety. This is how they have gone far away from the truth. They have not distinguished between the efficient and the prescriptive will *(iradah)* of God, between existential and religious permission *(idhn),* the cosmic and the religious command *(amr),* and the natural and the religious dispatch *(irsal)* which we have discussed in detail elsewhere.

This attitude of theirs is also the cause of their failure to distinguish between the obligatory and the forbidden, between the friends of God and His enemies, and between the pious and the wicked. They put those who believe and do good and those who do mischief on the earth on the same level, and the pious and the wicked, the obedient and the disobedient in the same category. They abolish the distinction between command and prohibition, between joyful promise and wrathful threat, between things enjoined and things forbidden. They call this the realization of truth *(haqiqah).* By God, this is only the perception of existential reality *(haqiqah),* and it is nothing to be proud of. Even the worshiper of idols knew that God has said, "If you ask them who it is that created the heavers and the earth, they will certainly say, 'God!'" (31:25); or, "ASK: TO whom belongs the earth and all beings therein? (Say) if you know! They will say, 'To God!' Say: Yet will you not receive admonition?" (23:4-5). This means that the polytheists who worshiped idols also recognized that God was the Creator of everything, and that He was their Lord and Master. Hence, those whose truth *(haqiqah)* comes only to this are only close to the worshipers of dols.

A Believer differs from an unbeliever in that he believes in God and His messengers, believes in the truths they communicate, obeys what they enjoin, and engages in what God commands or loves for him, and not in the

faithlessness, immorality, and sin which He determines and ordains. He is not to be resigned to the Calamity that befalls him, or to be happy with the evil that he commits. He is to seek forgiveness for his sins, and bear patiently the affliction he has to suffer. In short, he has to do as God has said: "Patiently persevere, for the promise of God is true, and ask forgiveness for your faults" 40:55). God has mentioned obedience along with patience at various places in the Qur'an, such as, "if you are constant and do right, not the least harm will their cunning do to you" (3:120); "But if you persevere patiently and guard against evil, that will be one great thing" (3:180). Joseph repeated the same thing when, he said, "For him that is righteous and patient, never will God suffer the reward to be lost of those who do right" (12:90).

Rida and celebrating the praises of God (hamd)

Rida is an act of the heart, but its consummation is *hamd,* celebrating the praises of God. That is why some people explain *hamd* in terms of *rida* and it is also the reason why the Qur'an and the Sunnah advise people to praise God in every situation. It is because *rida* involves resignation to God's decrees. A *hadith* says, "The first people to be called to Paradise will be those who praise God in prosperity as well as in adversity."[641] Of the Prophet, it is said, "When something good happened to him he would say, 'Praise be to God by Whose favor good things become possible.' But when something unpleasant happened to him he would say, 'Praise be to God in every situation.'

Some Aspects of Muslim and Islamic History

The Muslim Decline : a tale of woes

The Muslim Ummah is diverse and broad, encompassing Muslims of many different specialisations, focuses and preferences.

The Muslim Ummah consists of Muslims who chose many vocations in life, hobbies, tastes, preferences, and specialisations. Some Muslims seek the path of Jihad, others specialise in 'self-purification' or 'spiritual purification' work (what I call 'Islamic Psychotherapy'), others specialise in business and economics, others specialise in education and learning in non-religious matters, some in preaching (dawah), and others specialise in studying Islamic law and jurisprudence (Islamic scholarship), and others in Islamic theology (study of creed).

To an extent, all Muslims should be acquainted with all these aspects of Islam, but every society needs specialists to excel in each of these paths in order to lead or achieve more than those who didn't have the time or resources to specialise themselves. For example, every Muslim can be a reservist in the army of a Caliphate, but not all Muslims are able to be full time professional soldiers or special forces – yet professional soldiers and special forces are vital for an effective army.

The problem is not the variety present within the Muslim world, but the parochial and narrow mindset that pervades the Muslim Ummah and the shallow level of thinking which causes Muslims to possess a very superficial level of understanding about many things. This situation within the very minds of the Muslim Ummah is the origin of the current problems of the Muslim world: the lack of independence from foreign domination, the lack of an Islamic society and environment, the lack of security and justice, the lack of unity, and the lack of resources to meet the needs of the people.

In more enlightened times, the diversity of the Ummah was a strength, and Muslims of differing specialisations worked together for the greater benefit of all – each working in their own niche under one political system, causing the society to excel and problems to be addressed. If one looks at any nation around the world, this is a self-evident observation! Some people are scientists, some people are

teachers, some are artists, some are soldiers, some are entrepreneurs, some are housewives or community activists some are philosophers, some are politicians. The key to a successful society is not the exclusive domination of one vocation over another, but rather the co-ordination and organisation of people from all these vocations, into one mutually supporting whole under one unitary PURPOSE.

Over the many hundreds of years of Muslim history, Muslim thinking became narrow, which caused the collapse of the political unity of the Ummah and then, with wealth and success, Muslims rested on their past achievements and let their thinking become superficial, which ultimately led to stagnation, introversion, superstition and lack of creativity, which then resulted in a loss of strength and caused the collapse of the political system for organising the Ummah – the Caliphate.

As the Muslim Ummah started to decline, the Muslims became aware of the material and spiritual misfortunes happening to them and desperately attempted to find solutions. However, due to their narrow minded thinking, Muslims who had strong opinions or preferences for one or two aspects of Islam then divided themselves into groups (i.e. 'revival movements') pursuing revival ONLY through those one or two aspects of Islam. The narrow thinking of these groups cause them to view the problem only through the lens of their chosen vocations and specialisations. Due to their superficial thinking, they missed seeing the underlying problem, and only considered how to deal with the apparent symptoms. Their narrow thinking then lead them to use only the methods their vocation/specialisation offered, leading them to (mis)apply only a partial solution that in most cases made the problems worse.

These groups are known by many names, but for ease of reference they can be divided up into generic descriptive categories:

Those who believe Jihad is the main way to revive the Ummah

Those who believe 'self-perfection' is the main way to revive the Umma

Those who believe material wealth and success is the main way to revive the Ummah
Those who believe learning and education in non-religious

matters is the main way to revive the Ummah Those who believe that the study of Islamic jurisprudence is the main way to revive the Ummah
– Those who believe that preaching Islam to non-Muslims is the main way to revive the Ummah
– Those who believe that the study of all branches of Islamic Theology is the main way to revive the Ummah
– Those who believe that waiting for the Mahdi and/or Isa (a.s.) is the main way to revive the Ummah

Now to those reading through this list, it should already be apparent to many what the problem with this is, and the solution. All those methods arise from aspects of Islam, from belief in the return of Isa (a.s.) to the obligation of Jihad. However, the question is whether Muslims pursuing only one of these, or some of these will be enough to cause the revival of the Muslim Ummah.

The rational answer is that Islam contains all these aspects (Jihad, self-perfection, jurisprudence, pursuit of economic success, pursuit of learning and education in the material matters, preaching, theology, and belief in the Mahdi and Isa [a.s.]) within itself, and none can be neglected or rejected. The self-evident truth is that the Muslim Ummah's pursuit of all these aspects will be what revival LOOKS like, but should NOT be confused with the method to achieve it. This distinction should be as obvious as the distinction between a finely crafted wooden table, and the activity used by the carpenter to make it.

Therefore the real question is not how to performs those aspects of Islam, but rather how to CAUSE and ORGANISE the Ummah to pursue these things collectively and for a unified Islamic purpose and goal. The method for revival is not something which lies in only one aspect of Islam then, but in the method by which the Ummah is transformed to excel in all these aspects, and the removal of the obstacles in the way.

However, the obstacles in the way are the current under-use of the Ummah's capacity for applying thinking to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the world, to understand and study things correctly, and then be able to solve problems with wisdom and apply creative solutions.

The solution to this, is to cause the Muslim Ummah to expand their thinking from narrow considerations (e.g. tribe, sect, nationality or race), and to deepen their thinking to look beyond superficial analysis and understandings (e.g. how the world works, the proofs for Islam, how human beings work, science etc).

The next consideration is how to organise the Ummah to begin mutually supporting its parts to excel in all aspects of Islam. It is evident that in all successful nations and communities which are based upon a way of life, are people who are organised under a unifying idea (deen min mabda). This idea gives rise to a common system that resolves their disputes and organises their activities towards a common benefit and goal – an ideal which gives them purpose. Currently Muslims are unaware of how Islam can achieve this, and it is this ignorance that leaves Muslims confused as to how to revive the Muslim world. To give one example, many Muslims know that Islam exhorts Muslims to be 'unified', but few know what unity means (e.g. is it absence of disagreement? is it unanimity in all Islamic opinions?) nor do many people know how Islam can practically achieve this.

Lastly, once the solution for removing the obstacles is understood, and the solution defined for organising the Ummah, the final question is how are these solutions to be delivered to the Ummah – e.g. if we have the medicine, how do we administer it to the patient?

Following this article I will write, in parts, an address of the method of each 'revival methodology' and assess both the intellectual justifications, methods and the emotional causes behind their adherents. After all the different movements are addressed, a conclusion will look at this verse of Quran:

> *'Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves' [Quran 13:11]*

A Short History of Muslims and Islam in Tibet

1. Many outsiders, even in present times, regard Tibet[2] primarily as a "remote area" even though the region ``has been influenced by its neighbours for many centuries. Tibetan culture was not only formed by Buddhism, but also influenced by other cultures and religions. Contacts between Tibet and the 'Islamic world' can be traced back to the eighth century. Not only significant contacts and relations between Tibet and its Muslim neighbours existed; over the centuries a comparatively small group of Muslims achieved increasing influence in Tibetan society.

In the last few decades, many papers and books on Islam and Tibet were published, in Western languages as well as in Chinese. Most of these publications are focused on Muslims and Islam in special regions such as Ladakh, Central Tibet or North Eastern Tibet (Amdo), on special historical periods, or on historical cultural interactions between Tibet and the 'Islamic world'. One of the most impressive projects in this context is "Islam & Tibet: Cultural Interactions (8th to 17th centuries)", established at the Warburg Institute in London.

This paper will not present new information concerning the historical background of Muslims and their origins in Central Tibet. Instead I will use background knowledge as a starting point to build a bridge between the history of Muslims in pre-modern and recent Central Tibet, and to give a perspective on future developments. Research on that present period is rather rare so far, not least due to the difficulty of doing fieldwork in Central Tibet on that special topic. In the centre of Tibet's capital Lhasa – close to the most important Buddhist temple – a new mosque was erected in 2003, much bigger than the previous one. This building is just one of the signs showing that a great number of Muslims live in Central Tibet today. But how much have the number of Muslims and the structure of the Muslim quarters changed? Has their influence changed in Tibetan society? Are social interactions and the co-existence of both groups formed in harmony or with potential conflict?

II. Significant Contacts between Tibet and the Islamic world

Buddhism spread from Northern India to Tibet in the seventh century and later, step by step, displaced or influenced the local religion. At the same time, the successors of Prophet Mohammed in other regions paved the way for Islam to become world religion.

Tibetans came in contact with Muslims, in the beginning, mainly through military activities. The Tibetan king, Songtsan Gampo (620-649), who established the Tibetan Yarlung Dynasty in the seventh century, pursued a strict policy of conquest. Fang Jianchang refers to Tibetan and Chinese historical sources where both fights between Tibet and Persia took place, but also military alliances between these regions in this historical period are mentioned. At that time, most of the Muslims who came to Tibet from Persia were military men; they took part in the military activities of the Yarlung Dynasty and were stationed in places of strategic significance. The successors of Songtsen Gampo, such as Trisong Detsen (755-797), continued expanding the territory of the Tibetan empire. Harun al-Rashid (reigned 786-809), caliph of the Arabian Abbassid Caliphate and promoter of Islam, formed an alliance with the Chinese Tang Dynasty (618-907) in order to fight the powerful Tibetan empire. During his reign, the Yarlung Dynasty was no longer able to continue its policy of conquest and as such the ongoing expeditions to Tibet promoted contacts with the Islamic world.

Since the early eleventh century, Tibet's neighbouring regions, Xinjiang and Kashmir, have been converted to Islam. Due to its geographical location and proximity to Kashmir, Ladakh had to deal with an expanding Islam from the fifteenth century onwards. Several sultanates tried to conquest Tibet and started their invasions in Ladakh. Most of the Muslim armies failed due to the strong Tibetan winters, the high altitude and the supply of food. When a conquest of Central Tibet failed, the influence of Islam in Ladakh became more and more intense and contacts between Tibetans and Muslims strengthened in different fields. One example was the marriage alliance between Ladakh's king, Jamyang Namgyal, and the daughter of the ruler of Skardo in the seventieth century. Them reign of the later Ladakh king, Delek Namgyal (1647-1685), was characterized by relations to both Tibet and Kashmir. Kashmir was ruled at that time by the last great Mogul emperor, Aurang zeb (1618-1707), who successfully forced Delek Namgyal by diplomatic pressure and military strength to accept the suzerainty of Aurangzeb. As a consequence of these circumstances, the foundation stone of the first

mosque in Ladakh was laid. Aside from this event, the royal house of Ladakh did not support Islam in any further case. In the middle of the ninetieth century, Tibet was involved in the Dogra war (1834-1842). In 1834, the Maharaja, Gulab Singh (1792-1857), ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, entrusted Lieutenant Zorawar Singh Kahluria (1786-1841) with the invasion of Ladakh, who successfully conquered Ladakh's king Choktrul. 15 Around 5,000 Dogras later invaded Western Tibet and forced the Ladakhis to support them. Captures and fights stretched up to Burang, where the Dogras were defeated by a Tibetan army close to Taglakhar and 700 of them were taken as prisoners to Lhasa. As a consequence of this event, more Dogras invaded Ladakh and many Ladakhis had to escape to the East. Another fight between the Dogras and the Tibetans and their Chinese allied troops led to a peace contract in 1842, declaring that Ladakh was united with Kashmir, the trading activities between Kashmir and Tibet would be transacted without restriction in future, and that Kashmir had to send a tribute caravan to Lhasa every three years.

Muslim armies never invaded Central Tibet; fights between Muslims and Tibetans only took place in the bordering areas of the Tibetan plateau. Nevertheless, the conversion of border regions to Islam, such as Ladakh, paved the way for peaceful contacts through trade, between Muslims and Tibetans that finally led to the settlement of Muslims in some parts of Tibet. Trade was very lively between Tibet and the 'Islamic world'; along with commerce, there also went intellectual trade. The location of Central Tibet between major civilizations made it an ideal transit-corridor. The trade with its neighbouring regions was very important for the country. Due to its natural geographical conditions and sparse population, the Tibetans depended on the import of several products from other countries. Tibet itself yielded valuable products such as gold, musk, yak tails, wool and salt; but it produced no iron, no spices, no fruits or tobacco. Islam spread to Tibet from two directions along trading routes. Muslims came from Arabia through Persia, via the ancient silk route to China, and Muslim communities were founded, step by step, primarily in the big trading metropolis. In this context, Muslims also settled down in North Eastern Tibet and were actively involved from there in trade with Central Tibet. The second group of Muslims also came directly from the West, from Turkestan, Baltistan and Kashmir through Ladakh to Western and Central Tibet.

III. The Fifth Dalai Lama and Pir Yakub: The Beginning of Concessions for Muslims in Central Tibet

Although Muslim traders took active part in the commercial business in Lhasa, and other larger towns in Central Tibet before the seventieth century, the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) marks an historical turning point for the Muslims and Islam in Tibet institutionally.

The first mosque of Lhasa was built in the Khachelingka (Tib. *kha che gling ga*), the 'garden of the Kashmiri', in the seventieth century. According to oral tradition told to Corneille Jest during his fieldwork in Lhasa by a Muslim, the history of the Khachelingka began as follows:

"As Saint Pir Yakub from India was praying, he was watched by the fifth Dalai Lama. One day, he spoke to Pir Yakub, asked him about his faith, and had long theological discussions with him. He recognized in Pir Yakub a Saint and asked what would please him. The latter requested land to build a mosque and bury the dead according to the Muslim ritual. The Dalai Lama gave a large marshy land located to the west of the Potala, where Muslims could build a mosque and lay out a garden. From a place designated by the Dalai Lama, arrows were thrown in the direction of the four quarters to demarcate the site; hence the name Gyamda was given to it. Pir Yakub died in Lhasa and his tomb can still be seen in the Kha-che ling-ka."

Another Chinese version of the story also exists. The head of the Muslim community was asked by the Dalai Lama for the reasons of the planned departure back to his homeland and explained that in Lhasa there was no area for settlement for the Muslims. Also in this story arrows were shot to mark the land that was given to the Muslims. The Chinese name for that area is *Jiangdakang*. *Jiang* means 'far reaching' and *da* can be translated as 'arrow(s)'.

Land for settlement was not the only important privilege that the Muslims were granted. The Fifth Dalai Lama also offered them other facilities. These activities were part of the policy to support ethnic, cultural and economic diversity in Tibet. Muslims were independent in settling their affairs with counsel and consultations, they used to elect among themselves a five-man committee with a leader. During the holy month, Saga Dawa, Buddhists were not allowed to eat meat, but Muslims were exempted from these restrictions. All these concessions remained with the Muslims until 1959. The Tibetan government also promoted the trading activities of the Muslims through tax reliefs; they waived customs duty, for instance. Attracted by these privileges, many

traders – mainly from Kashmir – decided to settle in Lhasa and other big settlements in Tibet, where they sold their products directly in Tibet or carried them to China. The Muslims traders in Tibet cooperated with other businessmen from Bengal, Benares, Nepal and Kashmir who supplied them with their products.

IV. The Role of Muslims in Tibetan Economy

Muslims played a decisive role in the development of the economy in pre-modern Tibet. In these circumstances, the relationship between Tibet and its neighbouring countries offered the Muslims the takeover of two important roles in Tibetan society. They not only acted as middlemen for the economic transactions of Tibetan traders and monasteries, but also opened shops in different towns in Tibet, where they sold their trading products. Most of the Tibetans traditionally lived as farmers and nomads who traded their own products, but trading transactions did not belong to their regular occupation. Muslims who settled down in cities as traders moved between agricultural regions, nomad areas and market places. In this environment, they acted as traders as well as middlemen and were encouraged by the Tibetan government to settle in Tibet exactly for these functions. The great monasteries of Central and Eastern Tibet benefited greatly from trading missions; they grew rich from their trade with China. Hajji Ghulam Mohammed, for example, was, for a long time, the representative of the Reting Monastery and led its commercial branches in towns like Tianjin, Beijing and Shanghai. Even the Tibetan government, in many cases, enlisted Muslims for important trading missions and offered them important contacts to the rulers of the country. The most important mission was the Lopchak caravan, led by Muslims such as Abdul Aziz, in 1942. In that year, his nephew joined him on this journey and left an account of his experiences during the long journey between Leh and Lhasa. He describes the history of the caravan as follows:

"In the 17th century, the king of Ladakh, Delek Namgyal (1675-1705), signed a treaty with the Lama Mipham Wangpo, representative of the Dalai Lama, at the end of which it was agreed that a Shungtshong *(government) caravan would go every year from Lhasa to Leh to maintain good relations of friendship and commerce between Ladakh and Tibet. Reciprocally, it was agreed that a Lopchak (biannual) caravan would be sent to Lhasa every two years by the* gyalpo *(king) of Ladakh. Both caravans would have the right to freely transport merchandise within the territories of the two countries. The government of Kashmir had to put an end to the treaty a few years previously.*

At the request of the Tibetan authorities, it was re-established in 1938. This is the caravan that my uncle is now directing.

The fact that even the Tibetan government engaged Muslims with the management of a trading caravan highlights the position and the meaning of the Muslims in Tibetan society. Not all Muslims who settled in Tibet were traders. One of the most important economic niches occupied by Muslims was the butchery; many of them lived as butchers or meat sellers. For Tibetan Buddhists who regarded the killing of animals as a sin, the carrying out of the slaughtering activities by Muslims was an attractive way to avoid the act of killing but to still enjoy meat as food. Some Muslims also settled as craftsmen. As well as specializing in products made of brocade and the production of felt carpets, they were also active as tailors. Several kinds of metalwork was also done by Muslims; there were in existence a remarkable number of little factories close to the Lhasa Barkhor, where silver objects for everyday use in monasteries, but also in private homes, were produced.

V. Muslim Groups and Communities in Lhasa

From the seventh century onwards, Lhasa was the religious, political and economic centre of the Tibetan world, where not only Tibetan pilgrims from all parts of the country, but also a remarkable number of Muslims from different areas, came for various reasons. Lhasa offered perfect conditions for local and foreign traders. Therefore, the largest Muslim community of Central Tibet settled and lived there. As the centre of Muslim activities, most mosques were also built in Lhasa, even cemeteries can be found close to the town. David Mac-Donald described his impression of the presence of Muslims in Lhasa in the beginning of the twentieth century as follows:

"Domiciled in Lhasa is a small community of Mussulmans, the descendants of immigrant traders from Ladakh and Kashmir. (…) Their forefathers have been trading in Tibet for hundreds of years, and for the past two centuries they have had a permanent settlement in Lhasa. They are a prosperous people, and are well treated by the Tibetan Government."

Tibetans distinguish different Muslim groups according to the origin of their ancestors. The general Tibetan term for Muslims is Khache (Tib. *khache*). This term refers to the name of the land where the ancestors of some of the Muslims living in Tibet came from: *kha che yul*, i.e. Kashmir. In Lhasa, the Khache were traditionally divided into three main groups: the Lhasa Khache, the Gharib and the Wabaling (Tib. *wa bak gling).* The so-called Lhasa Khache are not a homogeneous group but can be divided further into three subgroups; their bancestors came

exclusively from India, three quarters of them from Kashmir.38 The Gharib consisted of only 10 to 12 families. The Arabic word *gharib* (lit. 'stranger') contrasts with the words *amir* or *sharif,* which are used for persons with a high political or social standing. In the context of Lhasa, the Gharib are poor in contrast with the rich traders from Kashmir, on whom they depended. The Gharib probably belonged to fringe and banished groups or convicted people. While they lived as beggars, they also acted as service personnel for the local police and in prisons. Nowadays, the Gharib are no longer present in Lhasa, since they emmigrated to India during the years 1961 and 1962. Wabaling (Chinese: Hebalin) is the name for Muslims who came from China: also called Haopaling (Tib. *hao pa gling)*, and also Hopaling (Tib. *ho pa gling*) Khache. The Chinese terms Huihui or Hui were also used. The name Wabaling refers to the neighborhood where this group of Muslims lives. The Tibetan term *wa bak* is derived from the Chinese word *heba*. *Heba* means 'dam' or 'wall', *gling* means 'garden'. On the northern shore of the Lhasa Kyichu River, close to the mosque, a wall was built because of the danger of flooding. Since that time, the settlement quarter and the Muslims themselves have been called Wabaling. The Tibetans also call the Muslims who came from China Gya Khache (Tib. *rgya*[47] *khache*). The origin of the Wabaling is not clear. It is assumed that they came from Chinese areas where Islam had already been established.[49] According to this theory, their ancestors came from the Chinese provinces Gansu, Shanxi, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, during the reign of the Qing emperor Kangxi (1661-1722), Chinese Muslims began settling in Lhasa. Some of them were the descendents of soldiers of the Chinese army who fought against the Gurkhas.

The Muslim quarters in Lhasa are divided into two groups, distinguished by the two areas in which they live: Khachelingka (Tib. *kha che gling ga*), the settlement area of the Lhasa Khache, and Wabalingka (Tib. *wa bak gling ga*), the area were the Wabaling settled. It is not clear where exactly the Gharib lived in Lhasa, probably in Khachelingka. Khachelingka, the 'garden of the Khache', is situated three kilometres to the west of the Potala; there are residential buildings, two mosques and a cemetery. Khachelingka became a settlement area for Muslims in the eighteenth century. Wabalingka is situated in the centre of Lhasa, around the main mosque. There are many Muslim restaurants and butchers' shops along the streets. In traditional Tibet, the Wabaling delivered meat to the Potala. Next to the main mosque, there are two other little mosques in Wabalingka. The area also has its own cemetery.

Nowadays,Wabalingka is the home of the main Muslim community, with a large number of Muslims who came to Lhasa from different parts of China. The existence of two different Muslim quarters was also remarked upon by Western travelers:

"Although Lhasa is the center of the intolerant Tibetan Buddhist monks, there are two mosques or Mohammedan places of worship in the city (…). One of them is the Chinese mosque, for a considerable number of the Chinese merchants who used to have the privilege of coming to Lhasa where followers of Islam (…). The other mosque used by the Mohammedans traders from far-away Kashmir and Ladakh in the West is still in flourishing condition and has, so my visitors told me, about two hundred members."

Next to the Muslim communities in Lhasa also in other important Tibetan town Muslims settled down, mainly along the trading routes. Radhu referred to the community in Tsetang:

"In Tsethang, a town of some importance, the small local Islamic community grouped around an attractive mosque and cemetery. (...) [W]e recognised that these Muslims forming such an isolated island in a Buddhist land remained perfectly faithful to their traditional customs and to the practice of their religion."

He also described the arrival of the Lopchak caravan in Shigatse in 1943:

"And when the caravan entered the city it turned into an important procession which was joined by other lamas, children, as well as almost the entire local Muslim community, and of course, our relatives. (...) In the bazaar, the Muslims constituted the majority of the local merchants. (...) All Ladakhis, like Kashmiris and other Indians, were as a general rule, considered British subjects and they counted on the British resident in Shigatsay to stand up for them in any disputes that they might have with the Tibetan authorities."

There are also much older reports existing, by Westerners like the Jesuit Hippolyte Desideri, who spent five years in Tibet (1716-1721). He reported about Shigatse, the capital of the Tibetan province Tsang:

"The town of Giegazze lies in a wide plain, close to a mountain. It has a numerous population and harbours a great many foreigners: Tartars, Chinese, merchants from Kashmir, Hindustan and Nepal."

Muslims settled in Tibet gradually adopted Tibetan culture after their migration. They used the Tibetan language in everyday life and also enjoyed Tibetan food like Tsampa and butter tea. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark refers to these adaptations:

"Clothes worn by the Tibetan and Moslem men are usually identical with those of other Tibetans. (...) The women are dressed exactly like Buddhist Tibetan women. (...) Food taken by Tibetan Moslems is the same as eaten by the local people. They invariably nourish themselves on tsam-pa *(parched barley flour), buttered tea, meat both dried (*sha-kampo*) and fresh (*shalömpa*). They do not drink alcoholic beverages however, such as* chang *and* arak*, but do smoke cigarettes and very long (*kanas*) pipes (...)."*

According to the notes of George Bogle, who visited Central Tibet in 1774, the Kashmiri merchants he met in Shigatse also adopted the Tibetan custom to present 'silk handkerchiefs' – Tibetan ceremonial scarves (Kataks) – to guests. While Muslims in Tibet adapted to the culture surrounding them in many aspects, in their profane life they remained strong followers of their religion. There are only a few examples of Tibetan influence in the field of the practice of Islam – the old main mosque in Wabalingka, for instance, was decorated with the eight Buddhist auspicious symbols. In most sections of their religious life, the Muslims in Tibet developed a special strict tradition, maybe also due to their Diaspora situation. Radhu described them as "Muslims, completely isolated within the universe of Tibetan Buddhism", who "had kept their religious identity intact." Westerners also remarked upon the phenomena that the Muslims in Tibet kept their religious identity "because of their life in the midst of an alien people and religion, the Tibetan Ka-che are very strict followers of Islam." Also intermarriage took place between Tibetans and Muslims, although women who marry outside the Muslims community were cast out with ignominy. The man, however, could take a Buddhist wife, provided she first convert to Islam. In general, Muslims were well integrated into the local life; the small Muslim minority in Lhasa lived harmoniously with the Tibetan Buddhist popu lation in a peaceful coexistence.

VI. Muslims in Present Day Central Tibet

In the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Muslim quarters are today still concentrated in single locations; Lhasa is still the centre of Muslim activities and the largest Muslim community is located in the capital too. Most of the Khache who officially had Indian citizenship left Tibet after the political events in 1959, since their trade was disrupted and their future was unsure. Many of them settled in Northern India, in Kalimpong and Srinagar. According to Corneille Jests fieldwork in Lhasa in 1962, the poorer members of the Khache returned to Lhasa in 1962.

Economic and social transformations resulting from the reforms implemented under Deng Xiaoping have fundamentally changed life in Central Tibet. The new post-1980 policies allowed for a renaissance of traditional Tibetan culture. Restrictions on religious activities were loosened, and traditional customs enjoyed a revival. After the mosques were closed during the Cultural Revolution (1966- 1976), and religious teachings were forbidden, Islam also experienced a cultural revival in China after 1976. The introduction of a free market economy and the development of infrastructure led to an expansion of different economic fields. Individual trading activities were permitted once again; after twenty years of restrictions private trade was revived and flourishing. Chinese Hui Muslims took part on a grand scale. Many of them came and still come to Lhasa, mainly from the Chinese provinces Qinghai, Gansu und Ningxia for commercial reasons. While the Tibetans differentiate different Muslim groups due to the origin of their ancestors – like the Khache and the Wabaling – the Chinese state nowadays classifies all Muslims living in Tibet as belonging to the Muslim minority of the Hui. The Hui or Huihui represent an independent ethnic group which numbered 9,816,805 people in China in 2000 according to the official census. The older name for the Hui, 'Chinese Muslims', reflects the significance of religion for the ethnic identity of the Hui.[65] According to Chinese statistics in 1990, 3,011 Hui officially lived in the Tibet Autonomous Region. The issue of temporary residence certifications that allow keeping the main place of residence in the current home town led to a *de facto* population of Hui that is obviously higher and not registered in the public statistics. Moevus mentioned that according to estimations in the 1990s, around 2,000 Hui lived in Lhasa just from Linxia, representing 40% of Lhasa's Hui population. According to the research of Dru Gladney "there are between 20,000 and 30,000 Hui merchants from Ningxia, Gansu and Qinghai working primarily in Lhasa, as well as the other major trade centers throughout Tibet." When compared to the official population of Hui from 1990, this number nearly tripled within ten years. New statistics as of 2000 show a population of 9,031 Hui in the Tibet Autonomous Region, representing 0.35% of the population.

In relation to the distribution of population in sparsely populated Tibet and the concentration of Muslims in single areas of the region their population part in towns like Lhasa is much higher. The erection of the new big main mosque in Wabaling that replaced the smaller old main mosque in 2003, also symbolizes the growing number of Hui living in the Wabaling area today. Due to the uncertain population development, official statistics are not really a reliable source

for the Hui census. However, the increasing number of shops and restaurants led by Hui and the Hui traders in Lhasa cannot be ignored. What are the consequences of this population increase?

In Lhasa, many old Tibetan names for several Muslim institutions and places were replaced by Chinese names in recent years, because the Hui in everyday life mainly use the Chinese and not the Tibetan language. The Khachelingka community officially bears the Chinese name *Huizu yuanlin*, 'the garden of the Hui'. The mosques are named in Chinese, Tibetan and Urdu, but the Chinese name is the predominant one. Most restaurants have a Tibetan and a Chinese name, only a very few still use names in Urdu. The size of the Chinese characters used, compared to the Tibetan letters, is also larger. Most of the butcher shops only use Chinese names. The former uniqueness and variety of naming in the Tibetan Muslim communities in Lhasa is gradually dying out. Dru Gladney mentioned that the new Muslim immigrants were not welcomed by the long-settled Muslims families, even those whose ancestors came from China, like the Wabaling. They "did not interact with these traders, whom they regarded with suspicion, and preferred to marry their children to other Tibetans instead of to their co-religionist from outside Tibet." The increasing number of new Hui in Tibet changed the structure of the Muslim quarters in Lhasa as well. Especially in Wabaling, the longtime Muslim residents became a minority compared to the new settlers.

The future tendency could maybe even sharpen the recent situation. The construction of the Qinghai- Tibet railway, connecting Qinghai with Lhasa and completed in 2006, additionally stimulated the immigration of Hui from North Eastern Tibet and other parts of China to Central Tibet. Businessmen from Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia, who expect flourishing trade or business in Tibet, started settling along the railway route to Lhasa and in Lhasa itself. Many of them opened Hui restaurants.

While in pre-modern Tibet the Muslims mainly undertook functions like slaughtering, and were actively involved in trading transactions, their field of economic activities has greatly enlarged in the last twenty years in Central Tibet, such as the opening of restaurants or the construction of green houses in the surrounding of county towns. The reasons are not only to be found in their increasing number, but also in their fast adaptation to the new economic opportunities. While social interactions between the Tibetans and the Muslims in Central Tibet in

the past were characterized by harmony, the recent developments sooner implicate potential for conflicts.

Next to the increasing number of Han Chinese, the Hui Muslims represent the second biggest ethnic group in the urban area of Lhasa. The competition for jobs and economic sectors is increasing also due to the fact that many Tibetans from rural areas expect better chances in urban centres and tend to settle there. In actual fact, it is very difficult to compare the recent situation of Muslims in Central Tibet with the conditions for Muslims in Tibet before 1959, since the political and economical circumstances have changed so dramatically. Both groups have experienced transformation processes to a large extent, and it is not surprising that the co-existence between Tibetans and Muslims in Central Tibet has also not remained the same.

These recommendations arise from recognition of 1) the growing importance of CPS to the economic future of the country, national and homeland security, and the mission success of federal agencies, and 2) the increasing technical challenges resulting from rapidly growing demand for new capabilities and applications such as the Smart Grid, the Next Generation Air Transportation System, Intelligent [surface] Transportation Systems, Smart Medical Technologies, Smart Buildings, and Smart Manufacturing.

The ability to effectively engineer high-confidence cyber-physical systems is critical to success in government Smart Technology initiatives and private sector next generation products and systems that will *win the future*. A broad consensus has emerged, both among federal agencies and in the private sector, that current approaches to engineering these systems are too costly, too error prone, and take too long. According to the PCAST report:

Such systems can be difficult and costly to design, build, test, and maintain. They often involve the intricate integration of myriad networked software and hardware components, including multiple subsystems. In monitoring and controlling the functioning of complex, fast-acting physical systems (such as medical devices, weapons systems, manufacturing processes, and power-distribution

facilities), they must operate reliably in real time under strict constraints on computing, memory, power, speed, weight, and cost. Moreover, most uses of cyber-physical systems are safety-critical: they must continue to function even when under attack or stress.

The Future of Islam in America

The basic question is, "What is the future of Islam in North America?" While living in the present, we do not see the future, but we are concerned about the future as whatever we do now will affect our future. We are not the first wave of Muslims who have come to this country. There have been at least two or three different waves of Muslims who have come before us and they were not able to establish Islam for whatever reason came or were brought in as slaves from Africa two hundred years ago. They could not establish themselves as Muslims as they were oppressed. They were brought inchains and left on plantations in total slavery. Their religion was changed. Their names were changed. Their social structure was broken. They were not allowed to practice their religion. We do not blame them for not being able to establish Islam.

The second wave came after WW I from the Balkan States and Lebanon to what used to be the Ottoman Empire. These Muslims were settled in the midwest and northeast, including areas like Dearborn, Toledo, Chicago and Detroit. They were again more concerned at that time in establishing themselves economically and socially. Religion was not on their minds at that time. They melted away in the melting pot.

It is heartening to note that many of the descendants of the first two waves are now coming back to the fold of Islam and helping establish Islam in cooperation with the third wave which includes the immigrant Muslims coming to this country since the 1950s and constitution sixty percent (60%) of the six million, present-day American

Muslims. Many of the Afro-Americans are now finding their roots in Islam, reverting to Islam, and asserting themselves as Muslims.

We also must learn some lessons from the past of a glorious Muslim empire in Andalusia (Spain). For seven hundred years, Muslims ruled that country, but they were wiped out after the Inquisition. If we analyze what happened there including other areas of the world where Muslims are in the minority after being there for many years, we will understand that there were several reasons for them not to be able to establish Islam in the land forever, as we will see in the Muslim countries like Turkey or Egypt. The main reason was the lack of unity among Muslims .

In Spain, they created a class structure of Muslims of Arab descent, the Berbers and the native Spaniards, and these classes did not live on an equal basis. This was against Islam. Second, they were not able to practice Islam collectively, but more individually. Islam is a religion that has to be practiced collectively, and only then its the social fabric gets established: a thread by itself is not a nation. Third, Islamic education on an individual level was not there, there was more emphasis on secular and technical education. Fourth, too much emphasis was given to culture, whether in the form of art, music, dress or food, but not enough on defense. Although culture is necessary for the survival of the soul, defense is necessary for the survival of the body. One cannot live without the other. Finally, the most important reason that these civilizations were destroyed was that they failed to invite others to Islam. Invitation to Islam is not a luxury, but a necessity and a tool for survival.

While discussing the future of Islam in North America, we must examine the parameters of a good future. If we judge the future by numbers, yes, it is true that the number of Muslims has tremendously increased in this country. When I came here nearly a quarter of a century ago, there were not more than fifty thousand (50,000) Muslims, and now there are over six million. Nevertheless, if we look at the world map, the number of Muslims is over a billion; however, they hardly have any strength in that number.

It is the quality of Muslims that is important, rather than the number itself. The quality of Muslims who were in the minority and out numbered in the Battle of Badr by three to one, but they were able to succeed with the conviction "that they are the best nation created for mankind." If you look at the number by the number of mosques and minarets, yes, it is true that have also increased. In 1969 there were not more than fifty (50) mosques in the country, and now there are fourteen

hundred (1,400). However, unless we have a social structure to protect the mosques, these buildings by themselves cannot defend themselves.

In 1914, when the Russian Army moved into the Muslim part of the USSR from Tajikistan to Tashkent, there were twenty-four thousand mosques in those lands. The Red Army destroyed most of them. In seventy years of Communist rule, there were only four hundred left and most of them were lost except for prescribed prayers.

We see among the Christian churches that when the community moves out or has financial problems, they have to sell their churches and move to a different location. Hopefully, we will not come to a state that our Muslim community around a mosque will disappear, leaving only the beautiful minaret which will be purchased by another religion to be converted to their temple.

Although our number is very similar to those of Jewish people in this country, we have no comparison in strength in terms of economic, political and educational strength. We do not have any Congressmen or Senators. We do not control university boards or faculties. We do not have a single factory or financial institution which is able to employ Muslims in large numbers. Therefore, we cannot judge the future of Islam by looking at the number of Muslims praying on earth or attending the conventions and bazaars of ISNA. There have to be deeper indicators of our strength.

Many of the Muslims, especially of inunigrant origin, are embroiled in preserving the ethnic culture, but this ethnic culture, whether in the form of social parties, music shows, dress shows, is nothing but a passing show. After this generation of Muslims has passed away, our children and youth of immigrant parents will not be able to sustain that ethnic culture. There will be only two cultures left for Muslims: an Islamic culture and the American culture.

What about our health and physical strength? Muslims, in my opinion, are not keeping themselves in physical shape, either. Most of our parties involve nothing but sitting down, making chit-chat, eating very rich foods and then going to bed. The incidence of coronary artery disease, diabetes and many chronic conditions is increasing. We are not doing exercise nor are we watching our nutrition.

I am saying all this that if our neighbors decide to do the ethnic cleansing, as it is happening in Bosnia, twenty years from now, will we be prepared to defend our women and children? Or, if the United

Nations and Bosnian government request the Muslims of North America to come and help them, are we in physical shape to go there and help them in their war? A healthy Muslim is the backbone of a healthy community.

It is true that our family and our youth are our future. Muslim elders, scholars, writers and leaders of the present generation are now in their fifties. In the next twenty to twenty-five years, this generation, which is bearing the task of trying to establish Islam, will pass away. Unless we have created a new grassroots leadership which will replace us, there will be a vacuum.

Therefore, to establish our future, we must establish the Muslim youth. Our fear is that it is possible that many of our Muslim youth will be lost to the community by one way or another. I hope that this does not happen. The reasons for my fear are as such:

The USA is a melting pot. The heat is enough of the social peer pressure that people do get melted down in their values. They get lost. They may not be able to preserve their Islamic identity and outlook the way it should be in a pure form. It is possible that a new revised, modem and reformed version of Islam and Muslims will emerge which will be based more on secular lines with "modern" thinking than basic Islamic teachings. We see this in many civilizations who have pursued the line of modernization without deep thinking, whether it is in Turkey or Iran during the days of the Shah.

The second fear is that of their being lost with intermarriages. Unless we encourage Muslim youth to marry only Muslims when they reach that age and make that decision, it is possible that the future generation may be lost. Although it is permitted for a Muslim man to marry a woman of the People of the Book, there are several problems related to this.

Unless his wife becomes a practicing Muslim, the future of the children and their children to remain Muslim is not guaranteed. If there is a divorce in the family, which does happen frequently, then the custody of the child goes to the mother, who will remains a Jew or a Christian.

More important, the question is what will happen to Muslim girls if all the Muslim boys choose to marry People of the Book? Muslim women ate not allowed to marry non-Muslim men, and if they do, they would not be able to maintain Islam in their children, whose fathers are non-Muslims. Therefore, development and maintenance of intact Muslim families is the key to the survival of Islam in the USA.

My third concern about youth is regarding their education. I am not talking only of secular education, rather Islamic education. Parents have this attitude to drop their kids off at Sunday school and for it to provide a full Islamic education. In two hours a week, one cannot counteract the forty hours of secular education and secular ideas. Therefore, Sunday schools with a lack of funds and resources are not able to do the right job, either.

The result is that most of the education which the Muslim youth receive is superficial and "hearsay" rather than basic didactic Islamic education, unless some of them study on their own. With the lack of true education, our outlook about issues may change, and we may develop an attitude that "there is nothing wrong in this" as there is no mention in the Quran of such issues. This acceptance of certain practices and values of the society, unless it is confirmed by the Quran and sunnah, will become part of Islam, or at least of the practicing habit of the people. This is how cultural Islam develops .

Thus, we must emphasize in-depth, basic education for all Muslim youth, irrespective of their family background, whether their parents have been practicing or not practicing, or which school of thought they belong to, or what their socioeconomic structure is, in order to develop a nation of Muslims who have knowledge of Islam and are practicing Islam in order to preserve it.

With regard to secular education, the parents have a role to play in directing their youths educational future. The desire of most parents that children become doctors or engineers is not always necessary. There are other fields that Muslims should go into, including journalism, law, politics, accounting, banking, agriculture and teaching. In order to have a significant import on the decision-making process in this country, we need to have a lobby in each organization with grassroots support.

We must keep youth together, whether in the form of Islamic Boy Scouts, Islamic Girl Scouts, or Muslim Youth of North America. When we create such organizations, we should not just give them an umbrella to do their own thing in their own way without parental supervision. If Muslim youth organizations will do similar things as non-Muslim organizations will do, under the umbrella disguise of Islam, there will be no difference in them and non-Muslim organizations. There has to be adult supervision. The rules of the Shariah should still apply to them, and they must follow their daily routines of Islam.

Parents should support these organizations with their involvement and with their money. More important, Muslims, youth and adult men and women should have a sense of self-esteem which tells them that no matter how they are humiliated, defamed and ridiculed by the media, they are on the right path, a path which has been chosen for them, and neither do they eat pork, nor drink alcohol, nor listen to sexually suggestive rock music, nor be involved in an intimate mixing of sexes, because of their conviction of "being the best of mankind that have been raised to enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong-and they believe in God"

There is a fear that an American version of Islam may emerge among American Muslims, especially the youth. Our hope is that this will not happen, and Muslims in America will raise themselves from nationalism of all kinds and pride themselves on being just Muslims, caring for and loving all other Muslims around the world.

Our love for our family should not reflect in providing for them all the worldly amenities like clothing, food, house, car, TV,VCR, etc., but more importantly safeguarding their future in both worlds. "0 you who believe, save yourself and your family from a fire. " In this regard, Islam and the education of Muslim women is a matter of prime importance! The first school for a Muslim child is going to be his or her home. What kind of "teacher" has he?

Yes, our hope is in our family, and hope is in our youth. We hope that our families will remain intact as Muslim families and will be able to preserve Islam in their homes and propagate it outside the home. We hope the youth of today are better Muslims than their parents were when they were young. It is this hope that gives me the satisfaction that the adults of tomorrow will also be better adults than they are today, in terms of practicing Islam and love and unity among themselves.

We also hope that they will be better prepared to deal with situations and American issues. The present-day Muslim adults are living in isolation, not being part of the mainstream American society. We hope that the Muslim youths who are born and raised in this society will be able to mix with non-Muslims with conviction, maintaining their own identity in order to offer solutions for the country in which they are born.

Society as such is on a decline because of its moral decay and breakup of the social fabric. We hope that Islam in its pure form, when practiced by a large number of Americans, will be able to save America from such decay by offering a viable social alternative. The future of

Islam is not at stake, but that of those who profess to be its followers is. By the token of time the mankind is at loss except as those who have true belief and pure actions and join together in the mutual teaching of truth and patience,

Islam, according to newly released data from the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, is now the fastest growing religion in America, verifying President Barack Obama's claim that the United States is "no longer a Judeo-Christian country."

How many Muslims now live within the country remains anyone's guess, since the U.S. Census Bureau neglects to collect data on religious identification. A 2008 study by Cornell University projected that the number of Muslims in America had climbed from 1.6 million in 1995 to 7 million. A U.S. News and World Report survey, which was conducted at the same time, placed the figure at 5 million, while the Pew Research Center set the number at 2.35 million.

But Dew researchers admit that their survey was not thorough since it neglected to take into account immigrant and poor black Muslims What's more, these researchers only contacted Americans with telephone landlines and failed to take into account the fact that nearly 50% of U.S. residents aged 18-35 and the nearly 100% of the illegal immigrants who communicate exclusively by cell phones.

Muslim organizations, such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), supported the Cornell University projection of 7 million - - based on mosque attendance.

In any case, all demographers agree that throughout the coming decades, the faith of the Prophet Mohammed will continue to impact and transform all aspects of American life: social, political, and economic. They further maintain that, save for a cataclysmic sea-change in population trends, Islam by 2050 will emerge as the nation's dominant religion.

Much has been debated and written about the September 11 event and its aftermath. Bush's war on terror and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq easily qualify for top placing in the list of consequences of the September 11 tragedy. From the general perspective of Muslims, these unwelcome happenings also turned out to the most destructive consequences of the September 11 tragedy on the Islamic world. Both Afghanistan and Iraq underwent massive destruction, not only physically but also psychologically and culturally. There were

promises of a new Afghanistan and a new Iraq that would be far better respectively than the old ones, but in reality, sad to say, no better political and cultural replacement is yet in sight in each case. The full impact of the September 11 episode and Bush's global war on terror vis-à-vis Islam and the Islamic world is yet to be documented and studied. It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a discussion of this issue in all its dimensions. Our limited concern here is the impact of the September 11 event and the American-led war on terror against the global Muslim community with specific reference to Islam in the U.S. For brevity, we henceforth use the term 'American Islam' to mean Islam in the United States.'

Why the particular concern here with American Islam? I think we may cite many good reasons for this due concern. The issue of post-September 11 American Islam is of increasing interest to many people today both within and beyond the United States. American Islam is a phenomenon— religious, socio-cultural, and political — to watch in the 21st century. It is the fastest growing, the most vibrant, and the most intellectually influential Muslim minority in the world. In light of this, American Islam has the potentiality and the capacity to influence both the Islamic world and the West, particularly the U.S. It is therefore worth pointing out the full significance of the issue of American Islam for present and future Muslim-Western relations. This is the more so when we come to realize that future international peace would depend very much on the good and constructive relations between Islam and the West on the basis of mutual respect and the common good. President Barrack Obama realizes this crucial need, as amply demonstrated, during his Istanbul and Cairo speeches to the Islamic world. He deserves to be congratulated for emphasizing this need to the world. At least he has indicated his willingness to depart from those poorly informed past American policies that could only mean disastrous relations between Islam and the West.

It is a generally accepted fact that the American global war on terror has impacted the Islamic world, Muslim minorities in the West, and the world at large in various areas of life and to various degrees of suffering and hardship. Without doubt, Muslims have been the worst affected. It is enough to cite the fates of Afghanistan and Iraq. In the name of War on Terror these two Muslim nations have been uprooted and devastated. The devastation wrought on them in both human and material terms is beyond estimation. Now with the American military occupation of Iraq entering its seventh year, and with its end nowhere yet in sight despite Obama's commitment to end it, the country is set to slide further on the slope of destruction, violence and civil strife.

Similarly, there is no peace and meaningful national reconstruction in sight in Afghanistan. On the contrary, the war in Afghanistan is claiming more lives from among the military servicemen of the surviving members of the "coalition of the willing".

The September 11 episode and the war on terror have also impacted on Muslim minorities in the West in a significant way. Nowhere is this impact more visible than in the United States. The impact is to be observed and understood in both positive and negative senses. In the positive sense, September 11 and the war on terror have generated an unprecedented intensity of interest in Islam and in things Islamic. This extraordinary interest in the religion of Islam among non-Muslim westerners has often led to conversions to the religion. In the negative sense, Islamophobia has become worse as a result of September 11 and the subsequent war on terror. The phenomehon of Islamophobia which is usually equated with a general prejudice and hatred of Islam and the Muslims was already to be observed in the West long before September 11. We can even say that even before the Western coinage of the term Islamophobia' in the early 1980's the phenomenon as implied by the term was already a part of the Western intellectual and social scene that may be viewed as a manifestation of the Western response to Islam and the Islamic world. But September 11 had led to the creation of new negative images of Islam and Muslims in the minds of the Western public. It became more frequent for Islam — the religion, its holy book and its prophet — to be publicly ridiculed and hated. Not few voices have condemned the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad as "violent to the core". According to this poorly informed view, Muslim violence is rooted in the Qur'an and in the teachings and practices of the Prophet. Thesenegative stereotyping and ridiculing of Islam become all the more disturbing when they come from the respectable class of religious preachers and church leaders.

Islamophobia has angered the Muslims. So have the war on terror and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, both of which are predominantly Muslim countries. All of these negative phenomena and politically charged events have invited violent reactions from the more extremist-prone elements of Muslim communities. Muslim extremism invites in turn extreme reactions from the extreme elements in Western societies such as the 'skin heads', the neo-Nazis, and the religious ultra-right. American and European Muslims have to bear the brunt of the extreme reactions of these rightist groups, which often include physical attacks. We thus have a potentially dangerous spiral wave of negative

reactions and counter-reactions that could very well threaten the security of Muslims living in the West as well as worsen relations between the West and the Islamic world. September 11 attacks on the symbols of American wealth and power were supposed to be Muslim reactions against American-aided Israeli humiliation of the Palestinians and against other forms of "American tyranny" in various parts of the Islamic world. Then there came the American-led counter-reaction, namely the global war on terror and, within the framework of this 'ideological' war, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the despatch of American troops to Muslim Mindanao. These wars ignited a wave of violent anti-West demonstrations throughout the Islamic world, not to mention a series of bombings targeting Western embassies and places frequented by Western tourists. Anti-Americanism feelings ran high in the Islamic world. And as one opinion poll after another conducted in the Islamic world have shown, Muslims cite the American foreign policy, particularly its blanket support for Israel, as the main factor for their anti-Americanism.

Pre-9/11 American Islam

We would be in a better position to appreciate the significance of post-9/11 American Islam if we were to look at how it fared before the tragedy. I will provide a brief profile of pre-9/11 American Islam in three main areas: first, demography; second, projection of Islam; and third, Islam in the public square. In the demographic arena, I have referred to the fact that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States. In the American context, it is important to note that we are not speaking of birth-rate as the major factor in the Muslim demographic growth. Rather, we have in mind conversion to Islam as its most significant factor. The significance of conversion to Islam to the fast changing American demographic landscape may be gauged from statistical studies of the conversion phenomenon. According to a study, in the year 2000, just a year before 9/11, more than 20,000 Americans converted to Islam. This means that on average 55 Americans convert to Islam everyday. The study provides an interesting statistical break-up of the converts, especially in terms of ethnicity and gender. Sixty percent of the new converts were blacks, twenty percent whites, and twenty percent Hispanics. On the basis of gender the study showed that sixty percent of the converts were females, and forty percent males.

These figures do tell a lot of significant things about the changing pattern of American response to Islam. For example, the increasing percentage of white converts is a new development. What the

statistics are telling us is that 4,000 whites convert to Islam in the year 2000, which means at least ten conversions per day. The development is significant for at least two reasons. First, whites constitute the majority ethnic group in the country. This means that Islam is going to have a growing representation in the white majority community. Second, whites have been traditionally viewed as the most prejudiced toward Islam. The conversion statistics, however, show that Islam is beginning to be accepted by the white community. More than any other ethnic group white Muslims can play an effective role in bridging the wide cultural gap between the minority Muslim community and the majority white community.

Also quite surprising is the Hispanic share of the new converts. Their twenty percent share is also a significant development. Hispanics are widely viewed as staunch Catholics. So the fact that 4000 of them have entered Islam's fold in a year sent shock waves to the Catholic community. According to a Washington Post report published in 2001, Muslim Hispanics are still a tiny minority, numbering not more than 140,000. But there is an unmistakable trend: more and more Hispanics are embracing Islam, especially in the state of California. Hispanic mosques are now to be found in many big American cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C.

The fact that blacks still provide the biggest share of the new converts is not surprising. This has been the case so far ever since the heterodox Nation of Islam founded by Elijah Muhammad became transformed in the 1980's into an orthodox Afro-American Muslim community led by Warith al-Din Muhammad, Elijah's son. Over the years, Islam has proved to be far more attractive to blacks than any other non-Muslim ethnic group, because there is the prevailing perception among them that Islam inculcates a strong sense of cultural identity and a strong sense of social justice, both of which the black community badly needs. The claim widely propagated in the 1970's that blacks have Islamic roots traceable to their Muslim ancestors brought as slaves to America from Muslim Africa, provided a boosting factor to the favourable reception of Islam in the black community.

If the statistical break-up in the ethnic composition of the new Muslim converts continues to be the trend in the years to come, then it would not be long before American Islam can make the claim that it is truly representative of the broad American ethnic spectrum. With such an ethnically constituted American Islam exhibiting a sizeable white

component, we can expect it to play a more effective role in dealing with the challenges of Islamophobia, not just in America but also globally.

The gender composition of the new converts provides another surprise. Given the persisting negative portrayal of women in Islam in the Western media and widespread claims a Islam's suppression of women rights, one would expect Western women to shun Islam. But the contrary has happened as clearly shown in the study. Some of these women converts are now playing leadership roles in the American Muslim community. For example, Dr. Ingrid Mattson, a professor at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, has created history by becoming the first woman President of Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), an organisation which is known for being the largest annual gathering of American Muslims.

Insofar as the projection of Islam to the American public in all its forms is concerned, we may say that right up to the eve of the September 11 tragedy, there has been some sort of an explosion of information on Islam. At the same time, there was also a lot of misinformation disseminated to the public about Islam. The most important source of positive information about Islam came from the academia. Books and journal articles on Islam written by academics register a remarkable annual increase in the last decade of the 20th. I do not know of any other country in the world which has published works on Islam in its varied aspects as much as America has. Not even the most academically productive Muslim country has come close to its achievement. As for the misinformation on Islam and the negative portrayals of the religion, these came mainly from the media. True enough misinformation and misleading coverage of Islam has drawn fire from Muslim individuals and groups. But the confrontational encounter between the two opposing coverage of Islam may not be necessarily bad for the religion in the long run. Given the freedom and openness of intellectual expressions in America the parallel outputs of information and misinformation on Islam have tended to generate discourses and debates that lead to further curiosity and inquisitiveness about the religion among the American public. A progressively growing interest in Islam is thus assured.

On the subject of Islam's growing presence in the American public square in the years leading to the September 11 tragedy, there is indeed a lot. to report. There has been a substantial increase in the number of mosques and Islamic centres across America. More Muslim students had been registered in schools, colleges, and universities. Some of them succeeded in gaining admission into the Ivy League universities.

Their number is disproportionate to the size of their population. Muslim professionals— medical doctors, lawyers, engineers and others — are also on the increase. American Muslims are beginning to be noticed as a community with good educational and professional achievements. Their average income is higher than the national average. More Muslim organisations of various kinds have been formed. This development testifies to the growing Muslim social activism in the American public square in response to the current Muslim needs at both the individual and the community levels as well as to the challenges posed by contemporary American life.

In light of the overall positive profile of pre-9/11 American Islam as I have given in the preceding pages, it came as no surprise to me when on the very day of the tragedy I encountered American Muslim reactions that cast a bleak future for Islam and the Muslims in America. One American Muslim professor, a woman, reacted to me in person rather emotionally in these words: if it is true that Muslims did this [i.e. attacked and ruined the twin towers of the World Trade Centre], the progress we have made all these years is going to ruin! Her sentiment was widely shared in the American Muslim community in the days shortly after the tragedy.

Many thought Islam and the Muslim community in America would suffer a great setback from the 9/11 tragedy even if no conclusive proof of Muslim responsibility for the attack could be provided. No one could foresee then what would be in store for the future of American Islam. True enough, in the aftermath of the tragedy, American Muslims had to sail through rough waters in their courageous attempt to be both Muslim and American. But that aside, there were positive surprises in store for them as well as for the world. In the following pages, I will provide an overview of post-9/11 American Islam covering both its promising aspects and the main challenges it has to face. The most important of these challenges is Islamophobia.

Post-9/11 American Islam: Promises and Challenges

It is a surprise to many people that despite its numerous challenges, post-9/11 American Islam succeeded in sustaining its pre-9/11 achievements. In fact, in some respect it even succeeded in surpassing those achievements. This is certainly true in the three key areas I have considered in the profile of pre-9/11 American Islam:

conversion to Islam, coverage or projection of Islam for public consumption, and the visibility of Islam in the public square. One of the earliest Muslim concerns following the 9/11 tragedy was that it would scare away the Americans from Islam. The belief highlighted in this concern is that people would have such a negative image of Islam and the Muslims that they would not even bother to study and to get to know the real Islam believed and practised by the great majority of Muslims all over the world. If this belief turned out to be true then one consequence of it would be a sharp decline in conversion to Islam. But the feared decline did not happen. As it turned out, the opposite happened. A study of post-9/11 conversion to Islam showed that conversion figures for the year 2001, the year of the tragedy, and the year 2002 surpassed the figure for the year 2000.

The rise in conversion to Islam has to do perhaps with the extraordinary new interest in the religion of Islam which 9/11 has generated. Within a few months of the tragedy several surveys showed that sales of books on Islam went up. Americans rushed to the bookstores to buy books on just anything about Islam. The same surveys showed that in this rush for Islamic books, the Qur'an became the best-seller.

In post-9/11 America, publications of books and other writings on Islam increased substantially. The same phenomenon is to be observed in the electronic media. Coverage of Islam multiplied in numbers both in the print and the electronic media. It is not an exaggeration to claim that publications of Islamic books have become a booming industry in America.

The 9/11 tragedy has also resulted in greater visibility of Islam in the public square. On the political front we could see Muslims playing a more active role in the political processes at all levels. At both national and state levels they have become better organised politically. They were able to mobilise Muslim voters across America to the point of being able to influence the outcome of presidential election in a number of key states such as Illinois, Wisconsin, Florida and New Jersey. There is now a visible Muslim lobby in Congress which in 2006 has its first Congressman in the person of Keith Allison, a representative of Minnesota's fifth congressional district. It was a great symbolic boost to the presence of Islam in the public square when Ellison decided to swear his oath of office on the Qur'an. His swearing on the Qur'an became the more significant for the American public when he used a copy of the Muslim holy book once owned by Thomas Jefferson, author of America's Declaration of Independence and its third President. That historic event

in American politics proved to be an excellent public relations exercise for American Islam.

A Muslim organisation which has played such an important role in raising the profile of Islam in the American public square is the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Created in June 1994, CAIR has the professed goals of enhancing understanding of Islam, promoting justice and empowering American Muslims. It is popularly seen today by both its supporters and its critics as a defender of the rights of Muslims in the United States. The aftermath of 9/11 has helped to project CAIR to the public square and through its advocacy, to push Islam to the centre stage of American national consciousness. CAIR is presently regarded as the most visible and public representative of the American Muslim community. With its dynamism and commitment to American Muslim rights in a national political climate dominated by fear of terrorism, CAIR has not been free of suspicions and even accusations by its critics and enemies of having ties with terrorist organisations and of pursuing a radical Islamic agenda. The accusations were of course most unfair and in fact baseless, since CAIR has consistently condemned terrorism. For example, CAIR with several American Muslim groups condemned the terrorist attacks on 9/11 within hour of the first plane crashing into the World Trade Centre. It is not true as claimed by some quarters that not a single American Muslim organisation has come out to publicly condemn the terrorist attack.

There are many other examples to illustrate the greater visibility of American Islam in post-9/11 American public life. Apart from the three areas which I have just discussed, we may observe the promising aspect of American Islam in the field of Islamic studies and Islamic scholarship. More courses on one or more aspects of Islam are being taught in American universities and colleges.

This means more lecturers or professors (faculties) are being hired to teach these courses. The teaching of Arabic gains wider currency. Islamic scholarship becomes more vibrant. Intellectual output in all areas of Islamic scholarship is acknowledged to be on the rise. This positive development in the domain of academic and intellectual life on Islam is worthy of special mention. This is because, as I have asserted earlier, the academia is the most important source of objective coverage of Islam.

While the promising aspects of post-9/11 American Islam are clearly visible, the same can be said about the kind of challenges it has to

face. American Muslims themselves see multiplying challenges to being Muslims in post-9/11 America. I have referred to Islamophobia as the most important of these challenges. American Muslims have to endure every kind of insult and attack imaginable on their religion and community. However, in any objective study of post-9/11 American Islam, both its promising aspects and negative challenges need to be dealt with together. Moreover, we find that the development of American Islam is very much influenced by the outcome of the dynamic interaction between the positive projection of Islam to the public and the stream of misinformation on Islam and its negative portrayal. It is true to say that there has been an explosion of both positive information and misinformation on Islam. The resulting scenario may be described as an intensifying clash between two images or portrayals of Islam. It is precisely because this clash has political implications for American politics that Islam has been pushed to the centre stage of American national consciousness.

The following passages are meant to provide an insight into the American public mind insofar as its response to the two opposing public projections of Islam is concerned. In a 2006 USA Today/Gallup Poll, it was found that substantial minorities of Americans admit to prejudice against Muslims. Forty-four percent of Americans have the perception that Muslims are too extreme in their religious beliefs. A significant twenty-two percent of them say they would not want a Muslim as a neighbour. More importantly, especially in the context of America being at war with terrorism associated by many with Islam or the Muslims, many Americans believe American Muslims are not loyal to the United States. This perception of Muslim disloyalty finds agreement with the Financial Times/Harris Poll findings released in August 2007 which claim that twenty-one percent of Americans say the presence of Muslims in their country is a threat to national security. However, American Muslims may see a ray of hope in the poll findings: forty-seven percent of Americans believe that American Muslims have become the subject of unjustified criticism and prejudice.

Many Americans have questions about Islam and the Muslims which they have been asking since September 11 until today. Among the most popular questions are the following: why do they hate us? What are the causes of Muslim extremism and terrorism? Is Islam a violent religion? Since some of these questions are not appropriately structured it is possible to say that they smack of Islamophobia, that is, negatively reacting to the growing presence of Islam and the

Muslims in America. To be sure, there are identifiable factors responsible for this rather active Islamophobia. Among the main factors are the following: [1] the persisting phenomenon of terrorism committed by some Muslim individuals or fringe groups in the name of Islam; [2] the persisting anti-Islamic sentiments and phobia displayed by the preachers of hate including Christian extremists; [3] the negative portrayals of Islam and quite often the anti-Islam and anti-Muslim outbursts by popular talk show hosts and political commentators in both TV and radio channels. All these factors tend to obscure the understanding of Islam and to inflame Islamophobia among the Americans. In the face of blatant discrimination against Muslims and the defamation of Islam, advocates of Muslim rights such as CAIR, have sought to respond to practically every manifestation of Islamophobia in American society.

No matter how hard the American Muslim community try to diminish the challenge of Islamophobia, they are not going to achieve it overnight. American Islamophobia is a much more complex phenomenon that what many Muslims understand it to be. Consequently, it is a much more complex and formidable challenge than what they have so far realised. Islamophobia is not simply a result of widespread American ignorance of Islam. There is an ideological dimension to the phenomenon which will help to sustain it for a long period of time. American Islam has to face political challenges of a more enduring nature emanating from this ideological dimension. Groups opposed to Islam for ideological reasons are found to have the tendency to inflate the threat of radical Islam. As Steve Chapman has observed in his interesting commentary in the Chicago Tribune, there are many Americans who see radical Islam as the heir of communism and Nazism. On the basis of this perception of radical Islam, Chapman is telling us that these Americans are bent on taking up the ideological position of "making war against radical Islam as sounding like a war between Islam and the West." One of these Americans whom Chapman mentioned by name was Norman Podhoretz, an adviser to Rudy Giuliani. Podhoretz wrote a book titled World War IV: The Long Struggle against Islamofascism. In this book he writes: "The stakes are nothing less than the survival of Western civilisation, to the extent that Western civilisation still exists, because half of it seems to be committing suicide." Interestingly, Chapman interprets the phrase in italics in the quotation as follows: "By that he seems to be referring not just, to terrorist groups but also to the proliferation of Muslims in the West, which many conservatives see as a mortal peril."

Conclusion

Thus far, American Muslims have tried to respond to the challenge of Islamophobia in various ways. Commendably, in their effort to strengthen their strategic position to counter the damaging onslaught of Islamophobia they have created new alignments and alliances with many non-Muslim American groups. Their effort in this direction is highly visible in a number of areas. First, there is much activity in the area of interfaith dialogue especially involving members of the three Abrahamic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Second, in the political arena, we see a growing Muslim activism to position their influence in both the Republican and Democratic parties. One of the goals of this activism is to help influence American foreignpolicy. Third, we see Muslim students and professors creating alliances with their non-Muslim colleagues in the universities and colleges in pursuit of the common goals of social justice and freedom. For example, we may refer to the role of Muslim students associations in nationwide campuses in mobilising support from other campus groups to counter the Islamophobia inflamed by the "Campus Watch" of Daniel Pipes, a vocal critic of American Islam.

It is the battle for influence in shaping the American foreign policy that is going to be the most bitter and the most far-reaching between the supporters and sympathisers of Islam and its opponents. The issue of Islam in American foreign policy is going to influence a lot of other issues which engage American Muslims, both in the positive and the negative sense. The opponents of American Islam are going to watch closely every step the Muslim community is taking in the political arena. In fact, there have been attempts at political pre-emptive strikes against the community with the view of preventing American Muslim political influence from taking shape.

It is difficult to say what the long-term impact of Islamophobia on American Islam would be. But on the basis of present trends discussed in the foregoing pages, we have good reason to believe that the outcome of the clash between the two sides of the divide — Islamic affirmation and Islamophobia — would be of great significance to the rest of the world, particularly the Islamic world.

Science and Technology in the Perspective of the Twenty-first Century

The first point, then, is that the structural aspects of "science, technology, and innovation" are imperfectly defined, complex, and poorly understood. There is still much work to do to identify measures, develop models, and test them against actual experience before we can say we really know what it takes to foster innovation. The second point I want to make is about the temporal aspects: all three of these complex activities are changing with time. Science, of course, always changes through the accumulation of knowledge, but it also changes through revolutions in its theoretical structure, through its ever-improving technology, and through its evolving sociology. The technology and sociology of science are currently impacted by a rapidly changing information technology. Technology today flows increasingly from research laboratories but the influence of technology on both science and innovation depends strongly on its commercial adoption, that is, on market forces. Commercial scale manufacturing drives down the costs of technology so it can be exploited in an ever-broadening range of applications. The mass market for precision electro-mechanical devices like cameras, printers, and disk drives is the basis for new scientific instrumentation and also for further generations of products that integrate hundreds of existing components in new devices and business models like the Apple iPod and video games, not to mention improvements in old products like cars and telephones. Innovation is changing too as it expands its scope beyond individual products to include all or parts of systems such as supply chains and inventory control, as in the Wal-Mart phenomenon. Apple's iPod does not stand alone; it is integrated with iTunes software and novel arrangements with media providers.

With one exception, however, technology changes more slowly than it appears because we encounter basic technology platforms in a wide variety of relatively short-lived products. Technology is like a

language that innovators use to express concepts in the form of products, and business models that serve (and sometimes create) a variety of needs, some of which fluctuate with fashion. The exception to the illusion of rapid technology change is the pace of information technology, which is no illusion. It has fulfilled Moore's Law for more than half a century, and it is a remarkable historical anomaly arising from the systematic exploitation of the understanding of the behavior of microscopic matter following the discovery of quantum mechanics. The pace would be much less without a continually evolving market for the succession of smaller, higher capacity products. It is not at all clear that the market demand will continue to support the increasingly expensive investment in fabrication equipment for each new step up the exponential curve of Moore's Law. The science is probably available to allow many more capacity doublings if markets can sustain them. Let me digress briefly on this point.

Many science commentators have described the twentieth century as the century of physics and the twenty-first as the century of biology. We now know that is misleading. It is true that our struggle to understand the ultimate constituents of matter has now encompassed (apparently) everything of human scale and relevance, and that the universe of biological phenomena now lies open for systematic investigation and dramatic applications in health, agriculture, and energy production. But there are two additional frontiers of physical science, one already highly productive, the other very intriguing. The first is the frontier of complexity, where physics, chemistry, materials science, biology, and mathematics all come together. This is where nanotechnology and biotechnology reside. These are huge fields that form the core of basic science policy in most developed nations. The basic science of the twenty-first century is neither biology nor physics, but an interdisciplinary mix of these and other traditional fields. Continued development of this domain contributes to information technology and much else. I mentioned two frontiers. The other physical science frontier borders the nearly unexploited domain of quantum coherence phenomena. It is a very large domain and potentially a source of entirely new platform technologies not unlike microelectronics. To say more about this would take me too far from our topic. The point is that nature has many undeveloped physical phenomena to enrich the ecology of innovation and keep us marching along the curve of Moore's Law if we can afford to do so.

I worry about the psychological impact of the rapid advance of information technology. I believe it has created unrealistic expectations about all technologies and has encouraged a casual attitude among

policy makers toward the capability of science and technology to deliver solutions to difficult social problems. This is certainly true of what may be the greatest technical challenge of all time—the delivery of energy to large developed and developing populations without adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. The challenge of sustainable energy technology is much more difficult than many people currently seem to appreciate. I am afraid that time will make this clear.

Structural complexities and the intrinsic dynamism of science and technology pose challenges to policy makers, but they seem almost manageable compared with the challenges posed by extrinsic forces. Among these are globalization and the impact of global economic development on the environment. The latter, expressed quite generally through the concept of "sustainability" is likely to be a component of much twenty-first century innovation policy. Measures of development, competitiveness, and innovation need to include sustainability dimensions to be realistic over the long run. Development policies that destroy economically important environmental systems, contribute to harmful global change, and undermine the natural resource basis of the economy are bad policies. Sustainability is now an international issue because the scale of development and the globalization of economies have environmental and natural resource implications that transcend national borders.

From the policy point of view, globalization is a not a new phenomenon. Science has been globalized for centuries, and we ought to be studying it more closely as a model for effective responses to the globalization of our economies. What is striking about science is the strong imperative to share ideas through every conceivable channel to the widest possible audience. If you had to name one chief characteristic of science, it would be empiricism. If you had to name two, the other would be open communication of data and ideas. The power of open communication in science cannot be overestimated. It has established, uniquely among human endeavors, an absolute global standard. And it effectively recruits talent from every part of the globe to labor at the science frontiers. The result has been an extraordinary legacy of understanding of the phenomena that shape our existence. Science is the ultimate example of an open innovation system.

Science practice has received much attention from philosophers, social scientists, and historians during the past half-century, and some of what has been learned holds valuable lessons for policy makers. It is fascinating to me how quickly countries that provide avenues to

advanced education are able to participate in world science. The barriers to a small but productive scientific activity appear to be quite low and whether or not a country participates in science appears to be discretionary. A small scientific establishment, however, will not have significant direct economic impact. Its value at early stages of development is indirect, bringing higher performance standards, international recognition, and peer role models for a wider population. A science program of any size is also a link to the rich intellectual resources of the world scientific community. The indirect benefit of scientific research to a developing country far exceeds its direct benefit, and policy needs to recognize this. It is counterproductive to base support for science in such countries on a hoped-for direct economic stimulus.

Keeping in mind that the innovation ecology includes far more than science and technology, it should be obvious that within a small national economy innovation can thrive on a very small indigenous science and technology base. But innovators, like sci-entists, do require access to technical information and ideas. Consequently, policies favorable to innovation will create access to education and encourage free communication with the world technical community. Anything that encourages awareness of the marketplace and all its actors on every scale will encourage innovation.

This brings me back to John Kao's definition of innovation. His vision of "the ability of individuals, companies, and entire nations to continuously create their desired future" implies conditions that create that ability, including most importantly educational opportunity (Kao 2007, p. 19). The notion that "innovation depends on harvesting knowledge from a range of disciplines besides science and technology" implies that innovators must know enough to recognize useful knowledge when they see it, and that they have access to knowledge sources across a spectrum that ranges from news media and the Internet to technical and trade conferences (2007, p. 19). If innovation truly "flows from shifts in mind-set that can generate new business models, recognize new opportunities, and weave innovations throughout the fabric of society," then the fabric of society must be somewhat loose-knit to accommodate the new ideas (2007, p. 19). Innovation is about risk and change, and deep forces in every society resist both of these. A striking feature of the US innovation ecology is the positive attitude toward failure, an attitude that encourages risk-taking and entrepreneurship.

All this gives us some insight into what policies we need to encourage innovation. Innovation policy is broader than science and

technology policy, but the latter must be consistent with the former to produce a healthy innovation ecology. Innovation requires a predictable social structure, an open marketplace, and a business culture amenable to risk and change. It certainly requires an educational infrastructure that produces people with a global awareness and sufficient technical literacy to harvest the fruits of current technology. What innovation does not require is the creation by governments of a system that defines, regulates, or even rewards innovation except through the marketplace or in response to evident success. Some regulation of new products and new ideas is required to protect public health and environmental quality, but innovation needs lots of freedom. Innovative ideas that do not work out should be allowed to die so the innovation com-munity can learn from the experience and replace the failed attempt with something better.

Do we understand innovation well enough to develop policy for it? If the policy addresses very general infrastructure issues such as education, economic, and political stability and the like, the answer is perhaps. If we want to measure the impact of specific programs on innovation, the answer is no. Studies of innovation are at an early stage where anecdotal information and case studies, similar to John Kao's book—or the books on Business Week's top ten list of innovation titles—are probably the most useful tools for policy makers.

We have been urging increased attention to what I call the science of science policy—the systematic quantitative study of the subset of our economy called science and technology—including the construction and validation of micro- and macro-economic models for S&T activity. Innovators themselves, and those who finance them, need to identify their needs and the impediments they face. Eventually, we may learn enough to create reliable indicators by which we can judge the health of our innovation ecosystems. The goal is well worth the sustained effort that will be required to achieve it.

Energy. Everything from our finances and transportation to our health, water supply, and emergency responses depends on reliable energy. Energy delivery systems—networks of physical processes that produce, transfer, and distribute electricity, oil, and natural gas—are the backbone of the energy sector. These physical systems rely fundamentally on control systems—the interconnected electronic and communication devices that monitor and control these processes. Control systems

include the sensors and actuators that physically monitor and control the energy processes, the computer-based systems that analyze and store data, and the communication networks that interconnect the process and computer systems. Today's highly reliable and flexible energy infrastructure is possible due to the control systems' ability to provide timely information to system operators and automated control over a large, dispersed network of assets and components. A resilient, reliable, and secure electric transmission and distribution grid is paramount to the success of the economy and the public health and safety of citizens and businesses.

Where we are now: With population increases and economic growth comes increasing consumer demand for electricity. Today's electric grid is demand driven: electricity is generated as it is used, with minimal storage capability. Instead, the grid relies on control systems, high-speed computer and communication systems that constantly balance the stable generation and flow of electricity. Managing generation with requisite responsiveness to demand is inefficient for many of today's generation systems (especially coal-based) that are difficult and slow to switch on- or off-line in the face of load changes. Disturbances in the control can destroy critical process components and cause failures capable of stopping the generation and flow of electricity to end users across the nation. Excessive peak loads, overheated transmission lines, and natural accidents such as falling tree limbs cause brownouts and blackouts, sometimes triggering cascading power system failures affecting large regions of the country. The power grid also is vulnerable to intentional disruption: a shift from closed to extensively networked (including Internet) control and communication, and from proprietary to widely-accessible commercial software, has increased vulnerability to cybersecurity attacks. This was seen recently in the 2010 discovery of Stuxnet malware, specifically designed to exploit Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems.

In a first step to abate congestion, the widespread deployment of smart meters and an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) seeks to involve consumers in attempts to reduce peak and overall electricity use. ARRA-funded Smart Grid projects are expected to add 18 million meters to the 8 million currently installed; the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) estimates that 80 million meters may be installed by 2019. However, this does not fully resolve the overall structural issues confronting today's power system. Environmental issues have moved to the forefront of the electric power business. Currently, over two-thirds of electricity generation in the United States comes from the burning of fossil fuels (both natural gas and coal); however, generation from

renewable resources is increasing, and is expected to reach 772.99 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) by 2030. The growth rate of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydropower is increasing at both the bulk transmission system and at the distribution system levels. The mix is likely to change substantially over the next several decades as the nation seeks cleaner sources of power supply. Although renewable energy sources have immense potential for the future, the power they can supply is intermittent or at best variable. In today's grid this highly variable generation can compromise grid reliability.

Vision: Flexibility and resilience will be engineered into the power grid, providing real-time automated response, real-time pricing, dramatically reduced numbers and extent of outages and power quality disturbances, improved control of transmission and distribution capacity, better resource utilization and reduced congestion. The future grid must include control architectures that enable new and clean power supplies to be taken on- or off-line, readily and flexibly to meet requirements. New methods will be needed to incorporate vastly increased electricity storage capacity (batteries, PHEVs), that can buffer supply and demand, providing improved capacity to handle peak loads. The future grid control architecture will be required to integrate both centralized and distributed energy resources, exploiting new technologies for solar, thermal, wind, and water based generators, small modular reactors for smaller-scale nuclear power generation, and systems fired by alternative fuels. Smart buildings will include co-generation of heat and power. The previous lines dividing energy market components into generation, bulk energy transmission, and distribution are shifting, as plants and homes provide generation directly into what previously was considered the distribution network, at or near the point of consumption. CPS engineering will enable an end-to-end integrated control system view that allows optimization from generation to consumption. For example, the advanced metering infrastructure can be extended to enable more comprehensive management of industrial energy consumption, "smart load", to schedule power utilization. Advances in cyber-physical systems technology -- with cybersecurity built-in -- will provide next-generation platforms for resilient, secure, real-time networked control of these diverse elements. The scope of these long-needed changes will create diverse new opportunities for growth of this sector through innovation in highly flexible and dependable (resilient, safe, and secure) energy technologies. The vision is of a robust 21st century US energy technology sector that depends on, and provides jobs for, a skilled workforce that

can build and operate this dynamic new landscape of U.S. energy systems and infrastructure.

Trasportiaon. Advances in cyber-physical systems are critical for the entire U.S. transportation industry to meet increasing complex and difficult goals from increasing safety, to reducing energy dependence and environmental impacts, to supporting sustainable economic growth and increased quality of life. Travel is a near universal daily activity whether going to work, to school, or to visit a neighbor. An efficient multi-modal network also is critical in supporting the national flow of goods and services across oceans and continents or to the corner store.

Defense. Where we are now: Defense systems for air, land, sea, and space are engineered systems that are increasingly cyber-physical systems. These are systems that monitor a tactical environment, operate and cooperate in that environment, alter it, adapt to it, and provide a common operational picture into its operations. The technology, operational environment, and mission change but these processes do not. These are complex, highly-integrated, and highly automated "smart" engineered systems: cyber-physical systems subject to requirements for extreme survivability, performance, robustness, interoperability, and security. These are highly engineered systems that operate in extreme environments. These systems are called upon to protect and defend our country and provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in times of international crisis. However, development and acquisition costs are escalating. Our inability to routinely build these systems at predictable and reasonable cost is arecurring problem, affecting our capacity to provide reliable and cost-effective technologies to our own armed forces and those of our allies.

Vision: The need for agile development of cyber-physical systems in defense will accelerate, driven by changing defense needs, Systems that will be smarter, more autonomous, highly coordinated, and remotely operated in shared physical spaces. New real-time networked control platforms will support rapid, safe, and secure integration of "smart" (cyber) technology that can exploit and manage innovative system physical capabilities and limitations. This will achieve unprecedented access to defense system automation, creating opportunities for new capability and innovation in operations. The trend will continue for smart unmanned platforms that increasingly can assume the roles that put personnel at risk, saving lives. Systems will be engineered to be more resilient to disruptive change without compromise of integrity. Systems will be more attuned to their environments, receiving and

processing massive amounts of data, to determine courses of action. The goal of a strategic technology is to prevent technology surprise in the face of globally- emerging conflict situations, while offering new technological opportunities and options for defense and humanitarian assistance in this new space. The future defense landscape is one of expanding cyber-physical systems capability. Investment in the foundations, engineering design tools, and implementation platforms for such systems is an essential ingredient to make the technology affordable and maintain US leadership in defense systems.

In the past the scientific fictions would mention imaginary events and unbelievable scientific feats. Now when those fictitions and feats have really come into existence it seems that they, then, were a type of predictions made by their writers and authors. This joyful phenomenon apart, the matter of great concern, however, being that the pace of development in different walks of science is much faster as compared to those of the social sciences. This situation is giving rise to complexities hitherto unfamiliar altogether in determining the nature of relationship between science and human socity. A balance, therefore, is needed between pure science and social sciences so that the science and technology might be used more effectively for an overall betterment and welfare of the entire humanity.

(Courtesy: al-Faisal, July, 2004)

Muslim World's Artefacts in London

Recently an exhibition of the Islamic artpieces was held on the Summerset House, located at the bank of London's river Tamms. These rare pieces of the art were created either to express the solicitous servitude towards Allah, the Creator, or to seek the pleasure of the kings and emperors who governed the Muslim lands pretending to be the Divine shed on the earth. The exhibition was given the name of the Heaven on Earth: the Art forms of the Islamic lands. The artefacts and the rare pieces of the Islamic world presented here are related to the State Heritage Meusium of Saint Peter's Burg and Khahil Collection, London. The exhibition continued for a number of days.

Pictures of the Artpieces

In the exhibition one hundred and twenty three artpices have been presented. These contained a wide range of artpieces from the upper stripe of the outer garment of the sacred Ka'bah, single leaf of an ancient Qur'anic copy written in the Kufi script, a copy of the Qur'an adorned with the water of gold, beautiful untensils made in different Islamic lands over different periods of the history and ancient metallic articles to the clothings and pictures. The periods of the preparation of all these artpieces extend from the eight century upto the nineteenth century and they at all constitute part of the Muslim cultural legacy.

During the exhibition its organizer, Ayish, told "Exhibition has been attended by a large number of people and the visitiors crossed the number of fifteen thousand, both from Mulsim and non-Muslim communities. To my thinking, the most interesting fact of the exhibition being that the non-Mulsim visitors are showing their deep interest in Islam. This interest is clearly noticed when they are seen obtaining the literature on Islam and the copies of the English translation of the Qur'an, the sacred scripture of Islam. Apart from the common appreciators of the art, there existed a good number of those visitors who wish to have a deeper understanding of the pieces of the historical art and communicate this deep level of understanding and importance to those interested. Sara, an art teacher at a local school, informed the visitors that she had been working on a course for other teachers to facilitate for them to develop an understanding of the art pieces made available in the exhibition. "The artpieces available in this exhibition," Sara said, "are from various lands and periods of Islamic history. Here exists", she told further, "What may satisfy the visitors of varying

interests." But there might be those who may not be in agreement with Sarah's last opinion. Rue Kidman, also a visitor, who was on his one day stay in London, got disappointed as visitor of the exhibition. He expressed his disappointment in the following words.

"To me, most of the historic items in the exhibition seemed insipid. Here I could not see the glitter and splendor which I had expected. This aspect of the art perhaps has little attraction for me. In fact I'm very much interested in the Western art I wished to know about Islam and cherished the hope that the exhibition would offer an opportunity in this regard".

In reply to my querry why that time was chosen for holding an exhibition of the Muslim world artefacts, Ayisha, the organizer of the exhibition, explained, "To my opinion, the time for this event is not mere an accident. As you may note, most of the museums throughout the world are organizing exhibitions of the historic artefacts of Islam and the world of Islam. The reason may, however, be traced in the existing global state of affairs. About Islam there is a worldwide phenomenon of growoing interest, curiosity and concern. Therefore, most people of the world are doing their best to know more and more about Islam."